

# THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

Carlo Goldoni

*English Version by Edward J. Dent*

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## CHARACTERS

PANTALONE DEI BISOGNOSI, *a Venetian merchant*

CLARICE, *his daughter*

DR. LOMBARDI

SILVIO, *his son*

BEATRICE RASPONI, *a lady of Turin, disguised as her brother*

FEDERIGO RASPONI

FLORINDO ARETUSI, *of Turin, lover of BEATRICE*

BRIGHELLA, *an innkeeper*

SMERALDINA, *maidservant to CLARICE*

TRUFFALDINO, *servant first to BEATRICE, and afterward to  
FLORINDO*

FIRST WAITER

SECOND WAITER

FIRST PORTER

SECOND PORTER

*The scene is laid in Venice.*

*The action takes place within a single day.*

## ACT I

### SCENE 1

#### *A Room in the House of PANTALONE*

PANTALONE, THE DOCTOR, CLARICE, SILVIO,  
BRIGHELLA, SMERALDINA

SILVIO, *offering his hand to CLARICE*. Here is my hand, and with it I give you my whole heart.

PANTALONE, *to CLARICE*. Come, come, not so shy, give him your hand too. Then you will be betrothed, and very soon you will be married.

CLARICE. Dear Silvio, here is my hand. I promise to be your wife.

SILVIO. And I promise to be your husband.

*They take hands.*

DR. LOMBARDI. Well done. Now that is settled, and there's no going back on it.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. There's luck for you! And me just bursting to get married!

PANTALONE, *to BRIGHELLA and SMERALDINA*. You two shall be witnesses of this betrothal of my daughter Clarice to Signor Silvio, the worthy son of our good Dr. Lombardi!

BRIGHELLA, *to PANTALONE*. We will, sir, and I thank you for the honor.

PANTALONE. Look you, I was witness at your wedding, and now you are a witness to my daughter's. I have asked no great company of friends and relations, for the doctor too is a man of my sort. We will have dinner together; we will enjoy ourselves and nobody shall disturb us.

*To CLARICE and SILVIO.*

What say you, children, does that suit you?

SILVIO. I desire nothing better than to be near my beloved bride.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. Yes, that's the best of all foods.

DR. LOMBARDI. My son is no lover of vanities. He is an honest lad; he loves your daughter and thinks of nothing else.

PANTALONE. Truly we may say that this marriage was made in Heaven, for had it not been for the death of Federigo Rasponi, my correspondent at Turin, you know, I had promised my daughter to him.

*To* SILVIO.

I could not then have given her to my dear son-in-law.

SILVIO. I can call myself fortunate indeed, sir; I know not if Signora Clarice will say the same.

CLARICE. You wrong me, dear Silvio. You should know if I love you. I should have married Signor Rasponi in obedience to my father; but my heart has always been yours.

DR. LOMBARDI. 'Tis true indeed, the will of Heaven is wrought in unexpected ways.

*To* PANTALONE.

Pray, sir, how did Federigo Rasponi come to die?

PANTALONE. Poor wretch, I hardly know. He was killed one night on account of some affair about his sister. Someone ran a sword through him and that was the end of him.

BRIGHELLA. Did that happen at Turin, sir?

PANTALONE. At Turin.

BRIGHELLA. Alas, poor gentleman! I am indeed sorry to hear it.

PANTALONE, *to* BRIGHELLA. Did you know Signor Federigo Rasponi?

BRIGHELLA. Indeed and I did, sir. I was three years at Turin.

I knew his sister too—a fine high-spirited young woman—dressed like a man and rode a-horseback; and he loved her more than anyone in the world. Lord! Who'd ha' thought it?

PANTALONE. Well, misfortune waits for all of us. But come, let us talk no more of sad things. Do you know what I have in mind, good master Brighella? I know you love to show your



skill in the kitchen. Now, I would have you make us a few dishes of your best.

BRIGHELLA. 'Tis a pleasure to serve you, sir. Though I say it that shouldn't, customers are always well contented at my house. They say there's no place where they eat as they do there. You shall taste something fine, sir.

PANTALONE. Good, good. Let's have something with plenty of gravy that we can sop the bread in.

*A knock at the door.*

Oh! Someone is knocking. Smeraldina, see who it is.

SMERALDINA. Yes, sir.

*Goes to door.*

CLARICE, *wishing to retire*. Sir, may I beg your leave?

PANTALONE. Wait; we are all coming. Let us hear who is there.

SMERALDINA, *coming back*. Sir, there is a gentleman's servant below who desires to give you a message. He would tell me nothing. He says he would speak to the master.

PANTALONE. Tell him to come up. We'll hear what he has to say.

SMERALDINA. I'll fetch him, sir.

*Exit.*

CLARICE. May I not go, sir?

PANTALONE. Whither then, madam?

CLARICE. I know not—to my own room—

PANTALONE. No, madam, no; you stay here.

*Aside to DR. LOMBARDI.*

These lovebirds can't be left alone just yet for a while.

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to PANTALONE*. Prudence above all things!

SMERALDINA *brings in* TRUFFALDINO.

TRUFFALDINO. My most humble duty to the ladies and gentlemen. And a very fine company too, to be sure! Ve-ry fine, indeed!

PANTALONE. Who are you, my good friend? And what is your business?

TRUFFALDINO, *to PANTALONE, pointing to CLARICE*. Who is this fair gentlewoman?

PANTALONE. That is my daughter.

TRUFFALDINO. Delighted to hear it.

SMERALDINO, *to* TRUFFALDINO. What's more, she is going to be married.

TRUFFALDINO. I'm sorry to hear it. And who are you?

SMERALDINA. I am her maid, sir.

TRUFFALDINO. I congratulate her.

PANTALONE. Come, sir, have done with ceremony. What do you want with me? Who are you? Who sends you hither?

TRUFFALDINO. Patience, patience, my good sir, take it easy.

Three questions at once is too much for a poor man.

PANTALONE, *aside to* DR. LOMBARDI. I think the man's a fool.

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to* PANTALONE. I think he's playing the fool.

TRUFFALDINO, *to* SMERALDINA. Is it you that are going to be married?

SMERALDINA, *sighs*. No, sir.

PANTALONE. Will you tell me who you are, or will you go about your business?

TRUFFALDINO. If you only want to know who I am, I'll tell you in two words. I am the servant of my master.

*Turns to* SMERALDINA.

To go back to what I was saying---

PANTALONE. But who is your master?

TRUFFALDINO, *to* PANTALONE. He is a gentleman who desires the honor of paying his respects to you.

*To* SMERALDINA.

We must have a talk about this marriage.

PANTALONE. Who is this gentleman, I say? What is his name?

TRUFFALDINO. Oh, that's a long story. Si'or Federigo Rasponi of Turin, that's my master, and he sends his compliments, and he has come to see you, and he's down below, and he sends me to say that he would like to come up and he's waiting for an answer. Anything else, or will that do?

*All look surprised.*

*To* SMERALDINA, *as before.*

Let's begin again.

PANTALONE. Come here and talk to me. What the devil do you mean?

TRUFFALDINO. And if you want to know who I am, I am Truffaldin' Battocchio from Bergamo.

PANTALONE. I don't care who *you* are. Tell me again, who is this master of yours? I fear I did not understand you rightly.

TRUFFALDINO. Poor old gentleman! He must be hard of hearing. My master is Si'or Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

PANTALONE. Away! You must be mad. Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin is dead.

TRUFFALDINO. Dead?

PANTALONE. To be sure he's dead, worse luck for him.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. The devil! My master dead? Why, I left him alive downstairs!

*To* PANTALONE.

You really mean he is dead?

PANTALONE. I tell you for an absolute certainty, he is dead.

DR. LOMBARDI. 'Tis the honest truth; he is dead; we can have no doubt about it.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Alas, my poor master! He must have met with an accident.

*To* PANTALONE *as if retiring*.

Your very humble servant, sir.

PANTALONE. Can I do nothing more for you?

TRUFFALDINO. If he's dead, there's nothing more to do.

*Aside*.

But I'm going to see if it's true or not.

*Exit*.

PANTALONE. What are we to make of this fellow? Is he knave or fool?

DR. LOMBARDI. I really don't know. Probably a little of both.

BRIGHELLA. I should say he was just a zany. He comes from Bergamo; I can't think he is a knave.

SMERALDINA. He's not such a fool, neither.

*Aside*.

I like that little dark fellow.

PANTALONE. But what is this nightmare about Signor Federigo?

CLARICE. If 'tis true indeed that he is here, it would be the worst of news for me.

PANTALONE. What nonsense! Did not you see the letters yourself?

SILVIO. If he *is* alive and here after all, he has come too late.

*Re-enter TRUFFALDINO.*

TRUFFALDINO. Gentlemen, I am surprised at you. Is that the way to treat a poor man? Is that the way you deceive strangers? Is that the behavior of a gentleman? I shall insist upon satisfaction.

PANTALONE, *to* DR. LOMBARDI. We must be careful, the man's mad.

*To* TRUFFALDINO.

What's the matter? What have they done to you?

TRUFFALDINO. To go and tell me that Si'or Federigo Rasponi was dead!

PANTALONE. Well, what then?

TRUFFALDINO. What then? Well, he's here, safe and sound, in good health and spirits, and he desires to pay his respects to you, with your kind permission.

PANTALONE. Signor Federigo?

TRUFFALDINO. Si'or Federigo.

PANTALONE. Rasponi?

TRUFFALDINO. Rasponi.

PANTALONE. Of Turin?

TRUFFALDINO. Of Turin.

PANTALONE. Be off to Bedlam, my lad; that's the place for you.

TRUFFALDINO. The Devil take *you* there, sir! You'll make me swear like a Turk. I tell you he's here, in the house, in the next room, bad luck to you.

PANTALONE. If you say any more I'll break your head.

DR. LOMBARDI. No, no, Signor Pantalone; I tell you what to

do. Tell him to bring in this person whom he thinks to be Federigo Rasponi.

PANTALONE. Well, bring in this man that is risen from the dead.

TRUFFALDINO. He may have been dead and risen from the dead, for all I know. That's no affair of mine. But he's alive now, sure enough, and you shall see him with your own eyes. I'll go and tell him to come.

*Angrily to PANTALONE.*

And 'tis time you learned how to behave properly to strangers, to gentlemen of my position, to honorable citizens of Bergamo.

*To SMERALDINA.*

Young woman, we will have some talk together when you will.

*Exit.*

CLARICE. Silvio, I am all of a tremble.

SILVIO. Have no fear; whatever happens, you shall be mine.

DR. LOMBARDI. Now we shall discover the truth.

PANTALONE. Some rogue, I dare say, come to tell me a string of lies.

BRIGHELLA. Sir, as I told you just now, I knew Signor Federigo; we shall see if it be he.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. That little dark fellow doesn't look like a liar. I wonder, now, if—

*Curtsy to PANTALONE.*

By your good leave, sir.

*Exit.*

*Enter BEATRICE, dressed as a man.*

BEATRICE. Signor Pantalone, that courtesy which I have so much admired in your correspondence is but ill matched in the treatment which I have received from you in person. I send my servant to pay you my respects, and you keep me standing in the street for half an hour before you condescend to allow me to enter.

PANTALONE, *nervously*. I ask your pardon. But, sir, who are you?



BEATRICE. Your obedient servant, sir, Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

*All look bewildered.*

PANTALONE. Extraordinary!

BRIGHELLA, *aside*. What does this mean? This is not Federigo, this is his sister Beatrice.

PANTALONE. I rejoice to see you, sir, alive and in health, after the bad news which we had received.

*Aside to DR. LOMBARDI.*

I tell you, I am not convinced yet.

BEATRICE. I know; 'twas reported that I was killed in a duel. Heaven be praised, I was but wounded; and no sooner was I restored to health than I set out for Venice, according to our previous arrangement.

PANTALONE. I don't know what to say. You have the appearance of an honest man, sir, but I have sure and certain evidence that Signor Federigo is dead, and you will understand that if you cannot give us proof of the contrary—

BEATRICE. Your doubt is most natural; I recognize that I must give you proof of my identity. Here are four letters from correspondents of yours whom you know personally; one of them is from the manager of our bank. You will recognize the signatures and you will satisfy yourself as to who I am.

*Gives four letters to PANTALONE, who reads them to himself.*

CLARICE. Ah, Silvio, we are lost.

SILVIO. I will lose my life before I lose you.

BEATRICE, *noticing BRIGHELLA, aside*. Heavens! Brighella! How the devil does he come to be here? If he betrays me—

*Aloud to BRIGHELLA.*

Friend, I think I know you.

BRIGHELLA. Indeed yes, sir; do you not remember Brighella Cavicchio at Turin?

BEATRICE. Ah yes, now I recognize you.

*Goes up to him.*

And what are you doing in Venice, my good fellow?

*Aside to BRIGHELLA.*



For the love of heaven do not betray me.

BRIGHELLA, *aside to* BEATRICE. Trust me.

*Aloud.*

I keep an inn, sir, at your service.

BEATRICE. The very thing for me; as I have the pleasure of your acquaintance, I shall come to lodge at your inn.

BRIGHELLA. You do me honor, sir.

*Aside.*

Running contraband, I'll be bound.

PANTALONE. I have read the letters. Certainly they present Signor Federigo Rasponi to me, and if you present them, I am bound to believe that you are—the person named therein.

BEATRICE. If you are still in doubt, here is Master Brighella; he knows me, he can assure you as to who I am.

BRIGHELLA. Of course, sir, I am happy to assure you.

PANTALONE. Well, if that be so, and my good friend Brighella confirms the testimony of the letters, then, dear Signor Federigo, I am delighted to see you and I ask your pardon for having doubted your word.

CLARICE. Then, sir, this gentleman is indeed Signor Federigo Rasponi?

PANTALONE. But of course he is.

CLARICE, *aside to* SILVIO. Oh misery, what will happen to us?

SILVIO, *aside to* CLARICE. Don't be frightened; you are mine and I will protect you.

PANTALONE, *aside to* DR. LOMBARDI. What do you say to it, Doctor? He has come just in the nick of time.

DR. LOMBARDI. *Accidit in puncto, quod non contingit in anno.*

BEATRICE, *pointing to* CLARICE. Signor Pantalone, who is that young lady?

PANTALONE. That is my daughter Clarice.

BEATRICE. The one who was promised in marriage to me?

PANTALONE. Precisely, sir; that is she.

*Aside.*

Now I am in a pretty mess.

BEATRICE, *to* CLARICE. Madam, permit me to have the honor.

CLARICE, *stiffly*. Your most humble servant, sir.

BEATRICE, *to* PANTALONE. She receives me somewhat coldly.

PANTALONE. You must forgive her, she is shy by nature.

BEATRICE, *to* PANTALONE, *pointing at* SILVIO. And this gentleman is a relative of yours?

PANTALONE. Yes, sir; he is a nephew of mine.

SILVIO, *to* BEATRICE. No, sir, I am not his nephew at all; I am the promised husband of Signora Clarice.

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to* SILVIO. Well said, my boy! Don't lose your chance! Stand up for your rights, but do nothing rash.

BEATRICE. What? You the promised husband of Signora Clarice? Was she not promised to me?

PANTALONE. There, there, I'll explain the whole matter. My dear Signor Federigo, I fully believed that the story of your accident was true, that you were dead, in fact, and so I had promised my daughter to Signor Silvio; but there is not the least harm done. You have arrived at last, just in time. Clarice is yours, if you will have her, and I am here to keep my word. Signor Silvio, I don't know what to say; you can see the position yourself. You remember what I said to you; and you will have no cause to bear me ill-will.

SILVIO. But Signor Federigo will never consent to take a bride who has given her hand to another.

BEATRICE. Oh, I am not so fastidious. I will take her in spite of that.

*Aside.*

I mean to have some fun out of this.

DR. LOMBARDI, *sarcastically*. There's a fine fashionable husband! I like him.

BEATRICE. I hope Signora Clarice will not refuse me her hand.

SILVIO. Sir, you have arrived too late. Signora Clarice is to be my wife, and you need have no hope that I will yield her to you. If Signor Pantalone does me wrong, I will be avenged upon him; and whoever presumes to desire Clarice will have to fight for her against this sword.

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside*. That's a fine boy, by the Lord!

BEATRICE, *aside*. Thank you, but I don't mean to die just yet.

DR. LOMBARDI. Sir, I must beg to inform you that you are too late. Signora Clarice is to marry my son. The law, the law, sir, is clear on the point. *Prior in tempore, potior in jure.*

*Exeunt* DR. LOMBARDI and SILVIO.

BEATRICE, *to* CLARICE. And you, madam bride, do you say nothing?

CLARICE. I say—I say—I'd sooner marry the hangman.

*Exit.*

PANTALONE. What, you minx! What did you say?

*Starts to run after her.*

BEATRICE. Stay, Signor Pantalone; I am sorry for her. It is not the moment for severity. In course of time I hope I may deserve her favor. Meanwhile let us go into our accounts together, for, as you know, that is one of the two reasons that have brought me to Venice.

PANTALONE. Everything is in order for your inspection. You shall see the books; your money is ready for you, and we will make up the account whenever you like.

BEATRICE. I will call on you at some more convenient time. Now, if you will allow me, I will go with Brighella to settle some little business which I have to do.

PANTALONE. You shall do as you please, and if you have need of anything, I am at your service.

BEATRICE. Well, if you could give me a little money, I should be greatly obliged; I did not bring any with me, for fear of being robbed on the way.

PANTALONE. I am delighted to serve you; but the cashier is not here just now. The moment he comes I will send the money to your lodgings. Are you not staying at my friend Brighella's?

BEATRICE. Yes, I lie there. But I will send my servant; he is entirely honest. You can trust him with anything.

PANTALONE. Very well. I will carry out your wishes, and if you may be pleased to take pot luck with me, I am yours to command.

BEATRICE. For today I thank you. Another day I shall be happy to wait upon you.

PANTALONE. Then I shall expect you.

*Enter SMERALDINA.*

SMERALDINA, *to* PANTALONE. Sir, you are asked for.

PANTALONE. Who is it?

SMERALDINA. I couldn't say, sir.

PANTALONE. I will come directly. Sir, I beg you to excuse me.

Brighella, you are at home here; be good enough to attend Signor Federigo.

BEATRICE. Pray do not put yourself about for me, sir.

PANTALONE. I must go. Farewell, sir.

*Aside.*

I don't want to have trouble in my house.

*Exit with SMERALDINA.*

BRIGHELLA. May I ask, Signora Beatrice—?

BEATRICE. Hush, for the love of Heaven, don't betray me. My poor brother is dead. 'Twas thought Florindo Aretusi killed him in a duel. You remember, Florindo loved me, and my brother would not have it. They fought, Federigo fell, and Florindo fled from justice. I heard he was making for Venice, so I put on my brother's clothes and followed him. Thanks to the letters of credit, which are my brother's, and thanks still more to you, Signor Pantalone takes me for Federigo. We are to make up our accounts; I shall draw the money, and then I shall be able to help Florindo too, if he has need of it. Be my friend, dear Brighella, help me, please! You shall be generously rewarded.

BRIGHELLA. That's all very well, but I don't want to be responsible for Signor Pantalone paying you out money in good faith and then finding himself made a fool of.

BEATRICE. Made a fool of? If my brother is dead, am I not his heir?

BRIGHELLA. Very true. Then why not say so?

BEATRICE. If I do that, I can do nothing. Pantalone will begin by treating me as if he were my guardian; then they will all worry me and say my conduct is unbecoming and all that sort of thing. I want my liberty. Help me to it. 'Twill not last long.

BRIGHELLA. Well, well, you were always one for having your own way. Trust me, and I'll do my best for you.

BEATRICE. Thank you. And now let us go to your inn.

BRIGHELLA. Where is your servant?

BEATRICE. I told him to wait for me in the street.

BRIGHELLA. Wherever did you get hold of that idiot? He cannot even speak plain.

BEATRICE. I picked him up on the journey. He seems a fool at times; but he isn't really a fool and I can rely on his loyalty.

BRIGHELLA. Yes, loyalty's a fine thing. Well, I am at your service. To think what love will make people do!

BEATRICE. Oh, this is nothing. Love makes people do far worse things than this.

BRIGHELLA. Well, here's a good beginning. If you go on that way, Lord knows what may come of it!

*Exeunt BEATRICE and BRIGHELLA.*

## SCENE 2

### *A Street with BRIGHELLA's Inn*

#### TRUFFALDINO *solus*

TRUFFALDINO. I'm sick of waiting; I can hold out no longer. With this master of mine there's not enough to eat, and the less there is the more I want it. The town clock struck twelve half an hour ago, and my belly struck two hours ago at least. If I only knew where we were going to lodge! With my other masters the first thing they did, as soon as they came to a town, was to go to a tavern. This gentleman—Lord no! He leaves his trunks in the boat at the landing stage, goes off to pay visits, and forgets all about his poor servant. When they say we ought to serve our masters with love, they ought to tell the masters to have a little charity toward their servants.



Here's an inn. I've half a mind to go in and see if I could find something to tickle my teeth; but what if my master comes to look for me? His own fault; he ought to know better. I'll go in—but now I come to think of it, there's another little difficulty that I hadn't remembered; I haven't a penny. Oh poor Truffaldin! Rather than be a servant, devil take me, I'd—what indeed? By the grace of Heaven there's nothing I can do.

*Enter FLORINDO in traveling dress with a PORTER carrying a trunk on his shoulder.*

PORTER. I tell you, sir, I can go no farther; the weight's enough to kill me.

FLORINDO. Here is the sign of an inn. Can't you carry it these few steps?

PORTER. Help! The trunk is falling.

FLORINDO. I told you you could not carry it; you're too weak; you have no strength at all.

*FLORINDO rearranges the trunk on the PORTER's shoulder.*

TRUFFALDINO. Here's a chance for sixpence.

*To FLORINDO.*

Sir, can I do anything for you?

FLORINDO. My good man, be so good as to carry this trunk into the inn there.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir, let me take it, sir. See how I do it.

*To the PORTER.*

You be off!

*TRUFFALDINO puts his shoulder under the trunk and takes it by himself, knocking the PORTER down at the same time.*

FLORINDO. Well done!

TRUFFALDINO. It weighs nothing. A mere trifle.

*Goes into the inn with the trunk.*

FLORINDO, *to* PORTER. There! You see how it's done.

PORTER. I can do no more. I work as a porter for my misfortune, but I am the son of a respectable person.

FLORINDO. What did your father do?

PORTER. My father? He skinned lambs in the town.



FLORINDO. The fellow's mad.

*To PORTER.*

That will do.

*Going towards the inn.*

PORTER. Please your honor——

FLORINDO. What do you want?

PORTER. The money for the portorage.

FLORINDO. How much am I to give you for ten yards? There's the landing stage!

*Pointing off.*

PORTER. I didn't count them. I want my pay.

*Holds out his hand.*

FLORINDO. There's twopence.

*Gives money.*

PORTER. I want my pay.

*Still holding out his hand.*

FLORINDO. Lord, what obstinacy! Here's twopence more.

*Gives money.*

PORTER. I want my pay.

FLORINDO, *kicks him*. Go and be hanged!

PORTER. Thank you, sir, that's enough.

*Exit.*

FLORINDO. There's a humorous fellow! He was positively waiting for me to kick him. Well, let us go and see what the inn is like——

*Re-enter TRUFFALDINO.*

TRUFFALDINO. Sir, everything is ready for you.

FLORINDO. What lodging is there here?

TRUFFALDINO. 'Tis a very good place, sir. Good beds, fine looking glasses, and a grand kitchen with a smell to it that is very comforting. I have talked with the waiter. You will be served like a king.

FLORINDO. What's *your* trade?

TRUFFALDINO. Servant.

FLORINDO. Are you a Venetian?

TRUFFALDINO. Not from Venice, but of the State. I'm from Bergamo, at your service.

FLORINDO. Have you a master now?

TRUFFALDINO. At the moment—to tell the truth, I have not.

FLORINDO. You are without a master?

TRUFFALDINO. You see me, sir. I am without a master.

*Aside.*

My master is not here, so I tell no lies.

FLORINDO. Will you come and be *my* servant?

TRUFFALDINO. Why not?

*Aside.*

If his terms are better.

FLORINDO. At any rate, for as long as I stay in Venice.

TRUFFALDINO. Very good, sir. How much will you give me?

FLORINDO. How much do you want?

TRUFFALDINO. I'll tell you: another master I had, who is here no more, he gave me a shilling a day and all found.

FLORINDO. Good, I will give you as much.

TRUFFALDINO. You must give me a little more than that.

FLORINDO. How much more do you want?

TRUFFALDINO. A halfpenny a day for snuff.

FLORINDO. Oh, I'll give you that and welcome.

TRUFFALDINO. If that's so, I'm your man, sir.

FLORINDO. But I should like to know a little more about you.

TRUFFALDINO. If you want to know all about me, you go to Bergamo; anyone there will tell you who I am.

FLORINDO. Have you nobody in Venice who knows you?

TRUFFALDINO. I only arrived this morning, sir.

FLORINDO. Well, well, I take you for an honest man. I will give you a trial.

TRUFFALDINO. You give me a trial and you shall see.

FLORINDO. First of all, I am anxious to know if there are letters at the Post for me. Here is half a crown; go to the Turin Post and ask if there are letters for Florindo Aretusi; if there are, take them and bring them at once. I shall wait for you.

TRUFFALDINO. Meanwhile you will order dinner, sir?

FLORINDO. Yes, well said! I will order it.

*Aside.*

He is a wag, I like him. I'll give him a trial.

FLORINDO *goes into the inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. A halfpenny more a day, that's fifteen pence a month. 'Tis not true that the other gentleman gave me a shilling; he gives me six pennies. Maybe six pennies make a shilling, but I'm not quite sure. And this gentleman from Turin is nowhere to be seen. He's mad. He's a young fellow without a beard and without any sense neither. He may go about his business; I shall go to the Post for my new gentleman.

*As he is going, BEATRICE enters with BRIGHELLA and meets him.*

BEATRICE. That's a nice way to behave! Is that the way you wait for me?

TRUFFALDINO. Here I am, sir. I am still waiting for you.

BEATRICE. And how do you come to be waiting for me here, and not in the street where I told you? 'Tis a mere accident that I have found you.

TRUFFALDINO. I went for a bit of a walk to take away my appetite.

BEATRICE. Well, go at once to the landing stage; fetch my trunk and take it to the inn of Master Brighella.

BRIGHELLA. There's my inn, you cannot mistake it.

BEATRICE. Very well, then, make haste, and I will wait for you.

TRUFFALDINO. The devil! In *that* inn?

BEATRICE. Here, you will go at the same time to the Turin Post and ask if there are any letters for me. You may ask if there are letters for Federigo Rasponi and also for Beatrice Rasponi. That's my sister. Some friend of hers might perhaps write to her; so be sure to see if there are letters either for her or for me.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. What *am* I to do? Here's a pretty kettle of fish!

BRIGHELLA, *to* BEATRICE. Why do you expect letters in your real name if you left home secretly?

BEATRICE. I told the steward to write to me; and I don't know which name he may use. I'll tell you more later.

*To TRUFFALDINO.*

Make haste, be off with you to the Post and the landing stage. Fetch the letters and have the trunk brought to the inn; I shall be there.

*Exit BEATRICE into the inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. Are you the landlord?

BRIGHELLA. Yes, I am. You behave properly and you need have no fear, I will do you well.

*Exit BRIGHELLA into the inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. There's luck! There are many that look in vain for a master, and I have found two. What the devil am I to do? I cannot wait upon them both. No? Why not? Wouldn't it be a fine thing to wait upon both of them, earn two men's wages and eat and drink for two? 'Twould be a fine thing indeed, if neither of them found out. And if they did? What then? No matter! If one sends me away, I stay with the other. I swear I'll try it. If it last but a day, I'll try it. Whatever happens I shall have done a fine thing. Here goes. Let's go to the Post for both of 'em.

*Enter SILVIO and meets TRUFFALDINO.*

SILVIO, *aside*. That is the servant of Federigo Rasponi.

*To TRUFFALDINO.*

My good man.

TRUFFALDINO. Sir?

SILVIO. Where is your master?

TRUFFALDINO. My master? He's in that inn there.

SILVIO. Go at once and tell your master that I wish to speak to him; if he be a man of honor let him come down; I wait for him.

TRUFFALDINO. My dear sir—

SILVIO, *angrily*. Go at once.

TRUFFALDINO. But I must tell you, my master—

SILVIO. Don't answer me; or, by Heaven, I'll—

TRUFFALDINO. But which do you want?

SILVIO. At once, I say, or I'll beat you.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Well, I don't know—I'll send the first I can find.

*Exit TRUFFALDINO into the inn.*

SILVIO. No, I will never suffer the presence of a rival. Federigo may have got off once with his life, but he shall not always have the same fortune. Either he shall renounce all claims to Clarice, or he shall give me the satisfaction of a gentleman. Here are some more people coming out of the inn. I don't want to be disturbed.

*Retires to the opposite side.*

*Enter TRUFFALDINO with FLORINDO.*

TRUFFALDINO, *points out* SILVIO *to* FLORINDO. There's the fire-eating gentleman, sir.

FLORINDO. I do not know him. What does he want with me?

TRUFFALDINO. I don't know. I go to fetch the letters, with your good leave, sir.

*Aside.*

I don't want any more trouble.

*Exit.*

SILVIO, *aside*. Federigo does not come?

FLORINDO, *aside*. I must find out what the truth is.

*To* SILVIO.

Sir, are you the gentleman who inquired for me?

SILVIO. I, sir? I have not even the honor of your acquaintance.

FLORINDO. But that servant who has just gone told me that with a loud and threatening voice you made bold to challenge me.

SILVIO. He misunderstood. I said I wished to speak to his master.

FLORINDO. Very well, I am his master.

SILVIO. You his master?

FLORINDO. Certainly. He is in my service.

SILVIO. Then I ask your pardon. Either your servant is exactly like another whom I saw this morning, or he waits on another person.



FLORINDO. You may set your mind at rest; he waits on me.

SILVIO. If that be so, I ask your pardon again.

FLORINDO. No harm done. Mistakes often occur.

SILVIO. Are you a stranger here, sir?

FLORINDO. From Turin, sir, at your service.

SILVIO. The man whom I would have provoked was from Turin.

FLORINDO. Then perhaps I may know him; if he has given you offence, I shall gladly assist you to obtain just satisfaction.

SILVIO. Do you know one Federigo Rasponi?

FLORINDO. Ah! I knew him only too well.

SILVIO. He makes claim, on the strength of her father's word, to the lady who this morning swore to be my wife.

FLORINDO. My good friend, Federigo Rasponi cannot take your wife away from you. He is dead.

SILVIO. Yes, we all believed that he was dead; but this morning to my disgust he arrived in Venice safe and sound.

FLORINDO. Sir, you petrify me.

SILVIO. No wonder! I was petrified myself.

FLORINDO. I assure you Federigo Rasponi is dead.

SILVIO. I assure you that Federigo Rasponi is alive.

FLORINDO. Take care you are not deceived.

SILVIO. Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi, the young lady's father, has made all possible inquiries to assure himself and is in possession of incontestable proofs that he is here in person.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Then he was not killed in the duel, as everybody believed!

SILVIO. Either he or I must renounce claim to the love of Clarice or to life.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Federigo here?

SILVIO. I am surprised that you have not seen him. He was to lodge at this very inn.

FLORINDO. I have not seen him. They told me that there was no one else at all staying there.

SILVIO. He must have changed his mind. Forgive me, sir, if



I have troubled you. If you see him, tell him that for his own welfare he must abandon the idea of this marriage. Silvio Lombardi is my name; I am your most obedient servant, sir.

FLORINDO. I shall be greatly pleased to have the honor of your friendship.

*Aside.*

I am confounded.

SILVIO. May I beg to know your name, sir?

FLORINDO, *aside*. I must not discover myself.

*To* SILVIO.

Your servant, sir, Orazio Ardeni.

SILVIO. Signor Orazio, I am yours to command.

*Exit* SILVIO.

FLORINDO. I was told he died on the spot. Yet I fled so hurriedly when accused of the crime that I had no chance of finding out the truth. Then, since he is not dead, it will be better for me to go back to Turin and console my beloved Beatrice, who is perhaps in suffering and sorrow for my absence.

*Enter* TRUFFALDINO, *with another* PORTER *who carries* BEATRICE'S trunk. TRUFFALDINO *comes forward a few steps, sees* FLORINDO *and, fearing to be seen himself, makes the* PORTER *retire.*

TRUFFALDINO. Come along. This way— The devil! There's my other master. Go back, friend, and wait for me at that corner.

*Exit* PORTER.

FLORINDO, *continuing to himself*. Yes, without delay. I will go back to Turin.

TRUFFALDINO. Here I am, sir.

FLORINDO. Truffaldino, will you come to Turin with me?

TRUFFALDINO. When?

FLORINDO. Now; at once.

TRUFFALDINO. Before dinner?

FLORINDO. No, we will have dinner, and then we will go.

TRUFFALDINO. Very good, sir. I'll think it over at dinner.

FLORINDO. Have you been to the Post?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

FLORINDO. Have you found my letters?

TRUFFALDINO. I have, sir.

FLORINDO. Where are they?

TRUFFALDINO. I will give you them.

*Takes three letters out of his pocket. Aside.*

The devil! I have mixed up one master's letters with the other's. How shall I find out which are his? I cannot read.

FLORINDO. Come, give me my letters.

TRUFFALDINO. Directly, sir.

*Aside.*

Here's a muddle.

*To FLORINDO.*

I must tell you, sir; these three letters are not all for your honor. I met another servant, who knows me; we were in service together at Bergamo; I told him I was going to the Post, and he asked me to see whether there was anything for *his* master. I think there was one letter, but I don't know which of them it was.

FLORINDO. Let me see; I will take mine and give you the other back.

TRUFFALDINO. There, sir; I only wanted to do my friend a good turn.

FLORINDO, *aside*. What is this? A letter addressed to Beatrice Rasponi? To Beatrice Rasponi at Venice?

TRUFFALDINO. Did you find the one that belongs to my mate?

FLORINDO. Who is this mate of yours who asked you to do this for him?

TRUFFALDINO. He is a servant—his name is Pasqual'—

FLORINDO. Whom does he wait upon?

TRUFFALDINO. I do not know, sir.

FLORINDO. But if he told you to fetch his master's letters, he must have told you his name.

TRUFFALDINO. Of course he did.

*Aside.*

The muddle's getting thicker.

FLORINDO. Well, what name did he tell you?

TRUFFALDINO. I don't remember.

FLORINDO. What?

TRUFFALDINO. He wrote it down on a bit of paper.

FLORINDO. And where is the paper?

TRUFFALDINO. I left it at the Post.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Confusion! What does this mean?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I am learning my part as I go along.

FLORINDO. Where does this fellow Pasquale live?

TRUFFALDINO. Indeed, sir, I haven't the slightest idea.

FLORINDO. How will you be able to give him the letter?

TRUFFALDINO. He said he would meet me in the Piazza.

FLORINDO, *aside*. I don't know what to make of it.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. If I get through this business clean 'twill be a miracle.

*To FLORINDO.*

Pray give me the letter, sir, and I shall find him somewhere.

FLORINDO. No; I mean to open this letter.

TRUFFALDINO. Oh, sir, do not do that, sir. Besides, you know how wrong it is to open letters.

FLORINDO. I care not; this letter interests me too much. It is addressed to a person on whom I have a certain claim. I can open it without scruple.

*Opens letter.*

TRUFFALDINO. As you will, sir.

*Aside.*

He has opened it!

FLORINDO, *reads*. "Madam, your departure from this city has given rise to much talk, and all understand that you have gone to join Signor Florindo. The Court of Justice has discovered that you have fled in man's dress and intends to have you arrested. I have not sent this letter by the courier from Turin to Venice, so as not to reveal the place whither you were bound, but I have sent it to a friend at Genoa to be forwarded to Venice. If I have any more news to tell

you, I will not fail to send it by the same means. Your most humble servant, Antonio."

TRUFFALDINO. That's a nice way to behave! Reading other people's letters!

FLORINDO, *aside*. What is all this? Beatrice has left home? In man's dress? To join me? Indeed she loves me. Heaven grant I may find her in Venice.

*To* TRUFFALDINO.

Here, my good Truffaldino, go and do all you can to find Pasquale; find out from him who his master is, and if he be man or woman. Find out where he lodges, and if you can, bring him here to me, and both he and you shall be handsomely rewarded.

TRUFFALDINO. Give me the letter; I will try to find him.

FLORINDO. There it is. I count upon you. This matter is of infinite importance to me.

TRUFFALDINO. But am I to give him the letter open like this?

FLORINDO. Tell him it was a mistake, an accident. Don't make difficulties.

TRUFFALDINO. And are you going to Turin now?

FLORINDO. No, not for the present. Lose no time. Go and find Pasquale.

*Aside.*

Beatrice in Venice, Federigo in Venice! If her brother finds her, unhappy woman! I will do all I can to discover her first.

*Exit toward the town.*

TRUFFALDINO. Upon my word, I hope he is not going away. I want to see how my two jobs will work out. I'm on my mettle. This letter, now, which I have to take to my other master—I don't like to have to give it him opened. I must try to fold it again.

*Tries various awkward folds.*

And now it must be sealed. If I only knew how to do it! I have seen my grandmother sometimes seal letters with chewed bread. I'll try it.

*Takes a piece of bread out of his pocket.*

It's a pity to waste this little piece of bread, but still something must be done.

*Chews a little bread to seal the letter and accidentally swallows it.*

The devil! It has gone down. I must chew another bit.

*Same business.*

No good, nature rebels. I'll try once more.

*Chews again; would like to swallow the bread, but restrains himself and with great difficulty removes the bread from his mouth.*

Ah, here it is; I'll seal the letter.

*Seals the letter with the bread.*

I think that looks quite well. I'm always a great man for doing things cleanly.

Lord! I had forgotten the porter.

*Calls off.*

Friend, come hither; take the trunk on your shoulder.

*Re-enter PORTER.*

PORTER. Here I am; where am I to carry it?

TRUFFALDINO. Take it into that inn; I am coming directly.

*BEATRICE comes out of the inn.*

BEATRICE. Is this my trunk?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

BEATRICE, *to* PORTER. Carry it into my room.

PORTER. Which is your room?

BEATRICE. Ask the waiter.

PORTER. There's one and threepence to pay.

BEATRICE. Go on, I will pay you.

PORTER. Please be quick about it.

BEATRICE. Don't bother me.

PORTER. I've half a mind to throw the trunk down in the middle of the street.

*Goes into the inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. Great folk for politeness, these porters!

BEATRICE. Have you been to the Post?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

BEATRICE. Any letters for me?

TRUFFALDINO. One for your sister.

BEATRICE. Good; where is it?

TRUFFALDINO. Here.

*Gives letter.*

BEATRICE. This letter has been opened.

TRUFFALDINO. Opened? No! Impossible!

BEATRICE. Yes, opened, and then sealed with bread.

TRUFFALDINO. I can't think how that can have happened.

BEATRICE. You cannot think, eh? Rascal, who has opened this letter? I must know.

TRUFFALDINO. Sir, I'll tell you, I'll confess the truth. We are all liable to make mistakes. At the Post there was a letter for me; I can't read very much, and by mistake, instead of opening my letter, I opened yours. I ask your pardon—

BEATRICE. If that was all, there's no great harm done.

TRUFFALDINO. 'Tis true, on the word of a poor man.

BEATRICE. Have you read this letter? Do you know what is in it?

TRUFFALDINO. Not a word. I can't read the handwriting.

BEATRICE. Has anyone else seen it?

TRUFFALDINO, *with an air of great indignation*. Oh!

BEATRICE. Take care now—

TRUFFALDINO, *same business*. Sir!

BEATRICE, *aside*. I hope he is not deceiving me.

*Reads to herself.*

TRUFFALDINO. That's all put straight.

BEATRICE, *aside*. Antonio is a faithful servant and I am obliged to him.

*To TRUFFALDINO.*

Listen; I have some business to do close by. You go into the inn, open the trunk—here are my keys—and unpack my things. When I come back, we will have dinner.

*Aside.*



I have seen nothing of Signor Pantalone, and I am anxious to have my money.

*Exit.*

TRUFFALDINO. Come, that all went well; it couldn't have gone better. I'm a great fellow; I think a deal more of myself than I did before.

*Enter* PANTALONE.

PANTALONE. Tell me, my good man, is your master in the house?

TRUFFALDINO. No, sir, he is not there.

PANTALONE. Do you know where he may be?

TRUFFALDINO. Not that neither.

PANTALONE. Is he coming home to dinner?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, I should think so.

PANTALONE. Here, as soon as he comes home give him this purse with these hundred guineas. I cannot stay, I have business. Good day to you.

*Exit* PANTALONE.

TRUFFALDINO. And a good day to you, sir! He never told me to which of my masters I was to give it.

*Enter* FLORINDO.

FLORINDO. Well, did you find Pasquale?

TRUFFALDINO. No, sir, I did not find Pasqual', but I found a gentleman who gave me a purse with a hundred guineas in it.

FLORINDO. A hundred guineas? What for?

TRUFFALDINO. Tell me truly, sir, were you expecting money from anyone?

FLORINDO. Yes; I had presented a letter of credit to a merchant.

TRUFFALDINO. Then this money will be for you.

FLORINDO. What did he say when he gave it to you?

TRUFFALDINO. He told me to give it to my master.

FLORINDO. Then of course it is mine. Am I not your master? What doubt could you have?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Yes, but what about t'other one?

FLORINDO. And you do not know who gave you the money?

TRUFFALDINO. No, sir; I think I have seen his face somewhere, but I don't remember exactly.

FLORINDO. It will have been the merchant to whom I had a letter.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, of course, sir.

FLORINDO. You won't forget Pasquale.

TRUFFALDINO. I'll find him after dinner.

FLORINDO. Then let us go and order our meal.

*Goes into the inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. We will. Lucky I made no mistake this time. I've given the purse to the right one.

*Goes into the inn.*

### SCENE 3

#### *A Room in the House of PANTALONE*

#### PANTALONE and CLARICE

PANTALONE. That's the long and short of it; Signor Federigo is to be your husband. I have given my word and I am not to be cozened.

CLARICE. You have my obedience, sir; but I beseech you, this is tyranny.

PANTALONE. When Signor Federigo first asked for your hand, I told you; you never replied that you did not wish to marry him. You should have spoken then; now it is too late.

CLARICE. My fear of you, sir, and my respect, made me dumb.

PANTALONE. Then your fear and respect should do the same now.

CLARICE. Indeed I cannot marry him, sir.

PANTALONE. No? And why not?

CLARICE. Nothing shall induce me to marry Federigo.

PANTALONE. You dislike him so much?

CLARICE. He is odious in my eyes.

PANTALONE. And supposing I were to show you how you might begin to like him a little?

CLARICE. What do you mean, sir?

PANTALONE. Put Signor Silvio out of your mind, and you will soon like Federigo well enough.

CLARICE. Silvio is too firmly stamped upon my heart; and your own approval, sir, has rooted him there the more securely.

PANTALONE, *aside*. In some ways I am sorry for her.

*To CLARICE.*

You have got to make a virtue of necessity.

CLARICE. My heart is not capable of so great an effort.

PANTALONE. Come, come; you shall!

*Enter SMERALDINA.*

SMERALDINA. Sir, Signor Federigo is here and desires to speak with you.

PANTALONE. Tell him to come in; I am at his service.

CLARICE, *weeping*. Alas! What torture!

SMERALDINA. What is it, madam? You are weeping? Truly you do wrong. Have you not noticed how handsome Signor Federigo is? If I had such luck, I would not cry; no, I would laugh with the whole of my mouth.

*Exit SMERALDINA.*

PANTALONE. There, there, my child; you must not be seen crying.

CLARICE. But if I feel my heart bursting!

*Enter BEATRICE in man's dress.*

BEATRICE. My respects to Signor Pantalone.

PANTALONE. Your servant, sir. Did you receive a purse with a hundred guineas in it?

BEATRICE. No.

PANTALONE. But I gave it to your servant just now. You told me he was a trustworthy man.

BEATRICE. Yes, indeed; there is no danger. I did not see him. He will give me the money when I come home again.

*Aside to PANTALONE.*

What ails Signora Clarice that she is weeping?

PANTALONE, *aside to* BEATRICE. Dear Signor Federigo, you must have pity on her. The news of your death was the cause of this trouble. I hope it will pass away in time.

BEATRICE, *to* PANTALONE. Do me a kindness, Signor Pantalone, and leave me alone with her a moment, to see if I cannot obtain a kind word from her.

PANTALONE. With pleasure, sir. I will go, and come back again.

*To* CLARICE.

My child, stay here, I will be back directly. You must entertain your promised husband awhile.

*Softly to* CLARICE.

Now, be careful.

*Exit* PANTALONE.

BEATRICE. Signora Clarice, I beg you—

CLARICE. Stand away, and do not dare to importune me.

BEATRICE. So severe with him who is your destined husband?

CLARICE. They may drag me by force to the altar, but you will have only my hand, never my heart.

BEATRICE. You disdain me, but I hope to appease you.

CLARICE. I shall abhor you to all eternity.

BEATRICE. But if you knew me, you would not say so.

CLARICE. I know you well enough as the destroyer of my happiness.

BEATRICE. But I can find a way to comfort you.

CLARICE. You deceive yourself; there is no one who can comfort me but Silvio.

BEATRICE. 'Tis true, I cannot give you the same comfort as your Silvio might, but I can at least contribute to your happiness.

CLARICE. I think it is quite enough, sir, that although I speak to you as harshly as I can, you should continue to torture me.

BEATRICE, *aside*. Poor girl! I can't bear to see her suffer.

CLARICE, *aside*. I'm so angry, I don't care how rude I am.

BEATRICE. Signora Clarice, I have a secret to tell you.

CLARICE. I make no promise to keep it; you had better not tell it me.

BEATRICE. Your severity deprives me of the means to make you happy.

CLARICE. You can never make me anything but miserable.

BEATRICE. You are wrong, and to convince you I will speak plainly. You have no desire for me, I have no use for you. You have promised your hand to another, I to another have already pledged my heart.

CLARICE. Oh! Now you begin to please me.

BEATRICE. Did I not tell you that I knew how to comfort you?

CLARICE. Ah, I feared you would deceive me.

BEATRICE. Nay, madam, I speak in all sincerity; and if you promise me that discretion which you refused me just now, I will confide to you a secret, which will ensure your peace of mind.

CLARICE. I vow I will observe the strictest silence.

BEATRICE. I am not Federigo Rasponi, but his sister Beatrice.

CLARICE. What! I am amazed. You a woman?

BEATRICE. I am indeed. Imagine my feelings when I claimed you as my bride!

CLARICE. And what news have you of your brother?

BEATRICE. He died indeed by the sword. A lover of mine was thought to have killed him, and 'tis he whom I am seeking now in these clothes. I beseech you by all the holy laws of friendship and of love not to betray me.

CLARICE. Won't you let me tell Silvio?

BEATRICE. No; on the contrary I forbid you absolutely.

CLARICE. Well, I will say nothing.

BEATRICE. Remember I count upon you.

CLARICE. You have my promise. I will be silent.

BEATRICE. Now, I hope, you will treat me more kindly.

CLARICE. I will be your friend indeed; and if I can be of service to you, dispose of me.



BEATRICE. I too swear eternal friendship to you. Give me your hand.

CLARICE. I don't quite like to—

BEATRICE. Are you afraid I am not a woman after all? I will give you proof positive.

CLARICE. It all seems just like a dream.

BEATRICE. Yes. 'Tis a strange business.

CLARICE. 'Tis indeed fantastic.

BEATRICE. Come, I must be going. Let us embrace in sign of honest friendship and loyalty.

CLARICE. There! I doubt you no longer.

*Enter PANTALONE.*

PANTALONE. Well done, well done; I congratulate you.

*To CLARICE.*

My child, you have been very quick in adapting yourself.

BEATRICE. Did I not tell you, Signor Pantalone, that I should win her round?

PANTALONE. Magnificent! You have done more in four minutes than I should have done in four years.

CLARICE, *aside*. Now I am in a worse tangle than ever.

PANTALONE, *to CLARICE*. Then we will have the wedding at once.

CLARICE. Pray do not be in too much haste, sir.

PANTALONE. What? Holding hands on the sly and kissing, and then in no haste about it? No, no, I don't want you to get yourself into trouble. You shall be married tomorrow.

BEATRICE. Signor Pantalone, 'twill be necessary first of all to arrange the settlement and to go into our accounts.

PANTALONE. We will do all that. These things can be done in a couple of hours.

CLARICE. Sir, I beseech you—

PANTALONE. Madam, I am going straight away to say a word to Signor Silvio.

CLARICE. For the love of Heaven do not anger him.

PANTALONE. What, what? Do you want two husbands?

CLARICE. Not exactly—but—

PANTALONE. Butt me no buts. 'Tis all settled. Your servant, sir.

*Going.*

BEATRICE, *to* PANTALONE. Listen, sir—

PANTALONE. You are husband and wife.

*Going.*

CLARICE. Had you not better—

PANTALONE. We will talk about it this evening.

*Exit.*

CLARICE. Oh, Signora Beatrice, 'tis worse than it was before!

## ACT II

### SCENE 1

#### *The Courtyard of PANTALONE'S House*

SILVIO and the DOCTOR

SILVIO. Sir, I entreat you to leave me alone.

DR. LOMBARDI. Stay, answer me.

SILVIO. I am beside myself.

DR. LOMBARDI. What are you doing in the courtyard of Signor Pantalone?

SILVIO. I intend either that he should keep his word that he has given me, or that he should render me account for this intolerable insult.

DR. LOMBARDI. But you cannot do this in Pantalone's own house. You are a fool to let yourself be so transported with anger.

SILVIO. A man who behaves so abominably deserves no consideration.

DR. LOMBARDI. True; but that is no reason why you should be so rash. Leave him to me, my dear boy, leave him to me; let me talk to him; maybe I can bring him to reason and make him see where his duty lies. Go away somewhere and wait for me; leave this courtyard; do not let us make a scene. I will wait for Signor Pantalone.

SILVIO. But sir, I—

DR. LOMBARDI. But, sir, I will have you obey me.

SILVIO. I obey you, sir. I will go. Speak to him. I wait for you at the apothecary's. But if Signor Pantalone persists, he will have to settle with me.

*Exit* SILVIO.

DR. LOMBARDI. Poor dear boy, I feel truly sorry for him. Signor Pantalone ought never to have led him on so far before he was quite certain that man from Turin was dead. I must see him quietly; I must not let my temper get the better of me.

*Enter PANTALONE.*

PANTALONE, *aside*. What is the doctor doing in my house?

DR. LOMBARDI. Oh, Signor Pantalone, your servant.

PANTALONE. Your servant, Doctor. I was just going to look for you and your son.

DR. LOMBARDI. Indeed? Good! I suppose you were coming to give us your assurance that Signora Clarice is to be Silvio's wife.

PANTALONE, *much embarrassed*. Well, the fact is, I was coming to tell you—

DR. LOMBARDI. No, no; there is no need for explanations. You have my sympathy in a very awkward situation. But we are old friends and we will let bygones be bygones.

PANTALONE, *still hesitating*. Yes, of course, in view of the promise made to Signor Federigo—

DR. LOMBARDI. He took you by surprise, and you had no time for reflection; you did not think of the affront you were giving to our family.

PANTALONE. You can hardly talk of an affront, when a previous contract—

DR. LOMBARDI. I know what you are going to say. It seemed at first sight out of the question that your promise to the Turin gentleman could be repudiated, because it was a formal contract. But that was a contract merely between you and him; whereas ours is confirmed by the girl herself.

PANTALONE. Very true, but—

DR. LOMBARDI. And as you know, in matrimonial cases, *consensus, et non concubitus, facit virum*.

PANTALONE. I am no Latin scholar; but I must tell you—

DR. LOMBARDI. And girls must not be sacrificed.

PANTALONE. Have you anything more to say?

DR. LOMBARDI. I have nothing more to say.

PANTALONE. Have you finished?

DR. LOMBARDI. I have finished.

PANTALONE. May I speak?

DR. LOMBARDI. You may.

PANTALONE. My dear Doctor, with all your learning—

DR. LOMBARDI. As regards the dowry, we can easily arrange matters. A little more or a little less, I will make no difficulties.

PANTALONE. I must begin all over again. Will you allow me to speak?

DR. LOMBARDI. With pleasure.

PANTALONE. I must tell you; I have the greatest respect for your legal learning, but in this case it does not apply.

DR. LOMBARDI. And you mean to tell me that this other marriage is to take place?

PANTALONE. For my part I have given my word and I cannot go back upon it. My daughter is content; what impediment can there be? I was just coming to look for you or Signor Silvio, to tell you this. I am extremely sorry, but I see no help for it.

DR. LOMBARDI. I am not surprised at your daughter's behavior. But I am surprised at yours, sir, at your treating me in this disgraceful way. If you were not perfectly certain about the death of Signor Federigo, you had no business to enter into an engagement with my son; and having entered into an engagement with him, you are bound to maintain that engagement whatever it may cost you. The news of Federigo's death was quite sufficient to justify, even to Federigo, your new intention; he could have no right to reproach you, still less to demand compensation. The marriage which was contracted this morning between Signora Clarice and my son *coram testibus* cannot be dissolved by a mere word given by you to another party. If I were to listen to my son I should insist upon the annulment of the new contract and compel your daughter to marry him; but I should be ashamed to receive into my house so disreputable a daughter-in-law, the daughter of a man who breaks his word as you do. Signor Pantalone, you have done me an injury, you



have done an injury to the house of Lombardi. The time will come when you will have to pay for it; yes, sir, the time will come—*omnia tempus habent*.

*Exit* DOCTOR.

PANTALONE. You may go to the devil for all I care. I don't care a fig, I'm not afraid of you. The Rasponis are worth a hundred of the Lombardis. An only son, and as rich as he is—you won't find that every day. It has got to be.

*Enter* SILVIO.

SILVIO, *aside*. 'Tis all very fine for my father to talk. Let him keep his temper who can.

PANTALONE, *seeing* SILVIO, *aside*. Here comes the other.

SILVIO, *rudely*. Your servant, sir.

PANTALONE. Yours to command, sir.

*Aside.*

He is boiling.

SILVIO. I have just heard something from my father; am I to believe that it is true?

PANTALONE. If your father said it, it must certainly be true.

SILVIO. Then the marriage is settled between Signora Clarice and Signor Federigo?

PANTALONE. Yes, sir, settled and concluded.

SILVIO. I am amazed that you should have the face to tell me so. You are a man of no reputation, you are no gentleman.

PANTALONE. What is all this? Is that the way you speak to a man of my age?

SILVIO. I don't care how old you are; I have a mind to run you straight through the body.

PANTALONE. I am not a frog, sir, to be spitted. Do you come into my own house to make all this turmoil?

SILVIO. Come outside then.

PANTALONE. I am surprised at you, sir.

SILVIO. Come on, if you are a man of honor.

PANTALONE. I am accustomed to be treated with respect.

SILVIO. You are a low fellow, a coward, and a villain.

PANTALONE. You are a most impertinent young puppy.

SILVIO. I swear to Heaven——

*Lays his hand to his sword.*

PANTALONE. Help! Murder!

*Draws a pistol.*

*Enter BEATRICE with a drawn sword.*

BEATRICE. I am here to defend you.

*To PANTALONE.*

PANTALONE. My dear son-in-law, I am much obliged to you.

SILVIO, *to* BEATRICE. You are the very man I want to fight.

BEATRICE, *aside*. I am in for it now.

SILVIO, *to* BEATRICE. Come on, sir.

PANTALONE, *frightened*. My dear son-in-law——

BEATRICE. It is not the first time that I have been in danger.

*To* SILVIO.

I am not afraid of you.

*Presents sword.*

PANTALONE. Help! Help!

*PANTALONE runs toward the street. BEATRICE and SILVIO fight. SILVIO falls and drops his sword. BEATRICE holds her point to his heart.*

*Enter* CLARICE.

CLARICE, *to* BEATRICE. Stop, stop!

BEATRICE. Fair Clarice, at your request I grant Silvio his life, and in consideration of my mercy, I beg you to remember your oath.

*Exit* BEATRICE.

CLARICE. Dear Silvio, are you hurt?

SILVIO. Dear Silvio! Faithless deceiver! Dear Silvio! To a lover disdained, to a betrayed husband!

CLARICE. No, Silvio, I do not deserve your reproaches. I love you, I adore you, I am indeed faithful.

SILVIO. Oh, lying jade! Faithful to me, forsooth! You call that fidelity, to plight your troth to another?

CLARICE. I never did so, nor will I ever. I will die rather than desert you.

SILVIO. I heard just now that you have given your oath.

CLARICE. My oath does not bind me to marry him.

SILVIO. Then what did you swear?

CLARICE. Dear Silvio, have mercy on me; I cannot tell you.

SILVIO. Why not?

CLARICE. Because I am sworn to silence.

SILVIO. That proves your guilt.

CLARICE. No, I am innocent.

SILVIO. Innocent people have no secrets.

CLARICE. Indeed I should be guilty if I spoke.

SILVIO. And to whom have you sworn this silence?

CLARICE. To Federigo.

SILVIO. And you will observe it so jealously?

CLARICE. I will observe it, rather than be a perjurer.

SILVIO. And you tell me you do not love him? He's a fool that believes you. I do not believe you, cruel, deceiver! Begone from my sight!

CLARICE. If I did not love you, I should not have run hither in all haste to save your life.

SILVIO. Then I loathe my life, if I must owe it to one so ungrateful.

CLARICE. I love you with all my heart.

SILVIO. I abhor you with all my soul.

CLARICE. I will die, if you are not to be appeased.

SILVIO. I would sooner see you dead than unfaithful.

CLARICE. Then you shall have that satisfaction.

*Picks up his sword.*

SILVIO. Yes, that sword should avenge my wrongs.

CLARICE. Are you so cruel to your Clarice?

SILVIO. 'Twas you that taught me cruelty.

CLARICE. Then you desire my death?

SILVIO. I know not what I desire.

CLARICE. I do.

*Points the sword at her breast.*

*Enter SMERALDINA.*

SMERALDINA. Stop, stop! What on earth are you doing?

*Takes the sword away from CLARICE.*

And you, you dog, you would have let her die?

To SILVIO.

Have you the heart of a tiger, of a hyena, of a devil? Look at you, you're a pretty little fellow, that expects ladies to disembowel themselves for you! You are much too kind to him, madam. He doesn't want you any more, I suppose? The man that doesn't want you doesn't deserve you. Let this murderer go to the devil; and you come along with me. There's no shortage of men; I'll promise to find you a dozen before evening.

*She throws down the sword, SILVIO picks it up.*

CLARICE, *weeping*. Ungrateful! Can it be that my death should cost you not a single sigh? But I *shall* die, and die of grief. I shall die, and you will be content. But one day you will know that I am innocent, and then, when it is too late, you will be sorry you did not believe me, you will weep for my misfortune and for your own barbarous cruelty.

*Exit CLARICE.*

SMERALDINA. Here's something I really don't understand. Here's a girl on the point of killing herself, and you sit there looking on, just as if you were at a play.

SILVIO. Nonsense, woman! Do you suppose she really meant to kill herself?

SMERALDINA. How should I know? I know that if I had not arrived in time, she would have been gone, poor thing.

SILVIO. The point was nowhere near her heart.

SMERALDINA. Did you ever hear such a lie? It was just ready to pierce her.

SILVIO. You women always invent things.

SMERALDINA. We should indeed, if we were like you. It's as the old saw says; we get the kicks and you the halfpence. They say women are unfaithful, but men are committing infidelities all day long. People talk about the women, and they never say a word about the men. We get all the blame, and you are allowed to do as you please. Do you know why? Because 'tis the men who have made the laws. If the women had made them, things would be just the other way.

If I were a queen, I'd make every man who was unfaithful carry a branch of a tree in his hand, and I know all the towns would look like forests.

*Exit SMERALDINA.*

SILVIO. Clarice faithless! Clarice a traitress! Her pretense at suicide was a trick to deceive me, to move my compassion. But though fate made me fall before my rival, I will never give up the thought of revenge. That wretch shall die, and my ungrateful Clarice shall see her lover wallowing in his own gore.

*Exit SILVIO.*

## SCENE 2

*A Room in BRIGHELLA'S Inn, with a door at each side and two doors at the back, facing the audience.*

TRUFFALDINO *solus*

TRUFFALDINO. Just my luck! Two masters and neither of them comes home to dinner. 'Tis two o'clock, and not one to be seen. Sure enough they will both come at the same time, and I shall be in a mess; I shall not be able to wait on both together, and the whole thing will be found out. Hush, here comes one. All the better.

*Enter FLORINDO.*

FLORINDO. Well, did you find that fellow Pasquale?

TRUFFALDINO. Didn't we say, sir, that I was to look for him after dinner?

FLORINDO. I am impatient to see him.

TRUFFALDINO. You should have come back to dinner a little sooner.

FLORINDO, *aside*. I can find no way of making certain whether Beatrice is here.

TRUFFALDINO. You told me to go and order dinner, and then you go out. The dinner will have been spoiled.



FLORINDO. I don't want to eat anything.

*Aside.*

I shall go to the Post; I must go myself; then perhaps I shall find out something.

TRUFFALDINO. You know, sir, at Venice you must eat; if you do not, you will fall sick.

FLORINDO. I must go out; I have important business. If I come back to dinner, well and good; if not, I shall eat in the evening. You can get yourself some food, if you like.

TRUFFALDINO. Very good, sir; just as you please, sir; you're the master.

FLORINDO. This money is heavy; here, put it in my trunk. There is the key.

*Gives TRUFFALDINO the purse and his keys.*

TRUFFALDINO. Certainly, sir; I'll bring the key back at once.

FLORINDO. No, no, you can give it me later. I can't stop. If I do not come back to dinner come to the Piazza; I can't rest till you have found Pasquale.

*Exit FLORINDO.*

TRUFFALDINO. Well, anyway, he said I could get myself some food; we are agreed about that. If he won't eat his dinner, he can leave it. My complexion was not made for fasting. I'll just put away this purse, and then—

*Enter BEATRICE.*

BEATRICE. Oh, Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. The devill

BEATRICE. Did Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi give you a purse of a hundred guineas?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, indeed he did.

BEATRICE. Then why did you not give it to me?

TRUFFALDINO. Was it meant for your honor?

BEATRICE. Was it meant for me? What did he say when he gave you the purse?

TRUFFALDINO. He told me I was to give it to my master.

BEATRICE. Well, and who is your master?

TRUFFALDINO. Your honor.

BEATRICE. Then why do you ask if the purse is mine?

TRUFFALDINO. Then it will be yours.

BEATRICE. Where is it?

TRUFFALDINO. Here, sir.

*Gives BEATRICE the purse.*

BEATRICE. Is the money all there?

TRUFFALDINO. I never touched it, sir.

BEATRICE, *aside*. I shall count it.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I made a mistake over the purse; but that puts it straight. I wonder what the other gentleman will say? Oh well, if the money wasn't his, he'll say nothing at all.

BEATRICE. Is the landlord in?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

BEATRICE. Tell him I shall have a friend to dinner with me, and he must get it ready as soon as ever he can.

TRUFFALDINO. What do you want for dinner, sir? How many dishes?

BEATRICE. Oh, Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi is not a man who expects a great deal. Tell him to give us five or six dishes; something good.

TRUFFALDINO. You leave it all to me, sir?

BEATRICE. Yes, you order it, do the best you can. I am going to fetch the gentleman, he is not far off; see that all is ready by the time we come back.

*Going.*

TRUFFALDINO. You shall see how they serve you here.

BEATRICE. Look! Take this paper; put it in my trunk. Be careful with it; 'tis a bill of exchange for four thousand crowns.

TRUFFALDINO. Be sure of it, sir, I'll put it away at once.

BEATRICE. See that everything is ready.

*Aside.*

Poor old Signor Pantalone—I gave him a terrible fright! I must cheer him up a little.

*Exit BEATRICE.*

TRUFFALDINO. Now's the time to do myself proud. 'Tis the first time this master of mine has told me to order him a

dinner. I'll show him I am a man of good taste. I'll just put away this paper and then—no, I'll put it away afterward, I must not waste time. Ho therel Is nobody at home?

*Calling into the inn.*

Call Master Brighella, tell him I want to talk to him.

*Returning.*

Now with a really good dinner 'tis not the having such and such dishes, but the way it is served. A properly laid table is worth more than a mountain of dishes.

*Enter BRIGHELLA.*

BRIGHELLA. What is it, Si'or Truffaldin'? What can I do for you?

TRUFFALDINO. My master has got a gentleman to dine with him. He wants a good dinner, and that quickly. Have you got enough in the kitchen?

BRIGHELLA. I always have plenty of everything. In half an hour I can put on any sort of dinner you like.

TRUFFALDINO. Very well, then. Tell me what you can give us.

BRIGHELLA. For two persons, we will have two courses of four dishes each; will that do?

TRUFFALDINO. He said five or six dishes—better say six or eight. That will do. What will you give us?

BRIGHELLA. For the first course, I shall give you soup, fried, boiled, and a fricandeau.

TRUFFALDINO. Three of the dishes I know, but I do not know the last.

BRIGHELLA. 'Tis a French dish—a ragout—very tasty indeed.

TRUFFALDINO. Very well, that will do for the first course; now the second.

BRIGHELLA. For the second course the roast, the salad, a meat pie—and a trifle.

TRUFFALDINO, *indignant*. What's that? A trifle? My master and his guest are gentlemen of substance; they won't be satisfied with a mere trifle. A trifle indeed!

BRIGHELLA. You don't understand. I said

*Impressively.*

a trifle! That's an English dish, a pudding, my very own speciality; there's not another man in Venice knows how to make it!

TRUFFALDINO, *nonchalantly*. Oh well, I dare say it will do. But how are you going to arrange the table?

BRIGHELLA. Oh, that's easy enough. The waiter will see to that.

TRUFFALDINO. No, my good friend, laying the table is a very important matter; that's the first thing about a dinner, to have the table properly laid.

BRIGHELLA. Well, you might put the soup here, the fried there, there the boiled and here the fricandeau.

*Makes an imaginary arrangement.*

TRUFFALDINO. I don't like that. Don't you put something in the middle?

BRIGHELLA. Then we should want five dishes.

TRUFFALDINO. Good, then let us have five.

BRIGHELLA. We can put the gravy in the middle.

TRUFFALDINO. No, no, friend, you know nothing about laying a table; you can't put the gravy in the middle; soup always goes in the middle.

BRIGHELLA. Then the meat on one side, and the gravy on the other.

TRUFFALDINO. Lord, lord, that won't do at all. You innkeepers may know how to cook, but you have no idea of butlering. Now I'll show you.

*Kneels down on one knee and points to the floor.*

Suppose this is the table. Now you look how we arrange the five dishes. Like this: here in the middle the soup.

*He tears off a piece of the bill of exchange and puts it on the floor to represent a dish.*

Now the boiled meat.

*Same business.*

Here we put the fried opposite,

*Same business.*

here the gravy and here that—what-d'ye-call-it. There now! Won't that look fine?

BRIGHELLA. H'm, 'twill do; but you have put the gravy too far away from the meat.

TRUFFALDINO. Very well, we must see if we can't put it a little nearer.

*Enter BEATRICE and PANTALONE.*

BEATRICE. What are you doing on your knees?

TRUFFALDINO, *stands up*. I was just planning how to have the table laid.

BEATRICE. What is that paper?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. The devil! The letter that he gave me!

BEATRICE. That is my bill of exchange.

TRUFFALDINO. I am very sorry, sir; I will stick it together again.

BEATRICE. You rascal! Is that the way you look after my things? Things of such value too! You deserve a good thrashing. What say you, Signor Pantalone? Did you ever see such a piece of folly?

PANTALONE. To tell the truth, I cannot help laughing. 'Twould be a serious matter if it could not be mended, but I will write you out another and then all will be in order.

BEATRICE. But just think if the bill had been made out not here but in some place a long way off!

*To TRUFFALDINO.*

You ignorant fool!

TRUFFALDINO. This has all come about because Brighella doesn't know how to lay a table.

BRIGHELLA. He finds fault with everything I do.

TRUFFALDINO. I am a man that knows his business.

BEATRICE, *to TRUFFALDINO*. Go away.

TRUFFALDINO. Things must be done properly.

BEATRICE. Be off, I tell you.

TRUFFALDINO. In the matter of pantry work I won't give way to the first butler in the land.

*Exit TRUFFALDINO.*

BRIGHELLA. I don't understand that fellow; sometimes he is a knave and sometimes a fool.



BEATRICE. This tomfoolery is all put on. Well, is dinner ready?

BRIGHELLA. If you will have five dishes to each course, 'twill take a little time.

PANTALONE. What's this about courses of five dishes? We'll take pot luck—a risotto, a couple of other dishes, and I shall be most obliged to you. My tastes are simple.

BEATRICE, *to* BRIGHELLA. You hear that? That will do nicely.

BRIGHELLA. Very good, sir; but will you please to tell me if there might be anything you would particularly fancy?

PANTALONE. I should like some rissoles if you have them; my teeth are not very good nowadays.

BEATRICE. You hear? Rissoles.

BRIGHELLA. Very good, sir. If you will sit down here for a moment, gentlemen, dinner will be ready directly.

BEATRICE. Tell Truffaldino to come and wait on us.

BRIGHELLA. I'll tell him, sir.

*Exit* BRIGHELLA.

BEATRICE. Signor Pantalone, I fear you will indeed have to be content with pot luck.

PANTALONE. My dear sir, I am overcome with all the attention you show me; in fact you are doing for me what I ought to be doing for you. But, you see, I have that girl of mine at home, and until everything is finally settled it would not be proper for you to be together. So I accept your kind hospitality to raise my spirits a little; indeed I still feel quite upset. Had it not been for you, that young scoundrel would have done for me.

BEATRICE. I am glad that I arrived in time.

*WAITERS enter from the kitchen and carry glasses, wine, bread, etc., into the room where BEATRICE and PANTALONE are to dine.*

PANTALONE. They are very quick about their business here.

BEATRICE. Brighella is a smart fellow. He was servant to a great nobleman at Turin, and still wears his livery.

PANTALONE. There's a very good tavern on the other side of the Grand Canal opposite the Rialto where you can eat very well; I have often been there with various good friends of

mine, very sound men, too; I often think of that place. They had some wonderful Burgundy wine there too—'twas a wine for the gods.

BEATRICE. There's nothing one enjoys more than good wine in good company.

PANTALONE. Good company! Ah, if you had known them! That was good company! Good honest fellows, with many a good story to tell. God bless them. Seven or eight of them there were, and there wasn't the like of them in all the world.  
*The WAITERS come out of the room and return to the kitchen.*

BEATRICE. You often had a merry time with these gentlemen, eh?

PANTALONE. And I hope I may live to have many more.

*Enter TRUFFALDINO carrying the soup tureen.*

TRUFFALDINO, to BEATRICE. Dinner is ready for you in that room, sir.

BEATRICE. Go and put the soup on the table.

TRUFFALDINO, *makes a bow*. After you, sir.

PANTALONE. A queer fellow, that servant of yours.

*Goes in.*

BEATRICE, to TRUFFALDINO. I want less wit and more attention.

*Goes in.*

TRUFFALDINO. Call that a dinner! One dish at a time! They have money to spend, but they get nothing good for it. I wonder if this soup is worth eating; I'll try it.

*Takes a spoon out of his pocket and tastes the soup.*

I always carry my weapons about me. Not bad; it might be worse.

*Goes into room with soup.*

*Enter FIRST WAITER with a dish.*

FIRST WAITER. When is that man coming to take the dishes?

TRUFFALDINO, *re-entering*. Here I am, friend. What have you got for me?

FIRST WAITER. Here's the boiled meat. There's another dish to follow.

*Exit* FIRST WAITER.

TRUFFALDINO. Mutton? Or veal? Mutton, I think. Let's taste it.

*Tastes.*

No, 'tis neither mutton nor veal; 'tis lamb, and very good, too.

*Goes toward* BEATRICE'S room.

*Enter* FLORINDO.

FLORINDO. Where are you going?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Oh dear, oh dear!

FLORINDO. What are you doing with that dish?

TRUFFALDINO. I was just putting it on the table, sir.

FLORINDO. For whom?

TRUFFALDINO. For you, sir.

FLORINDO. Why do you serve dinner before I come in?

TRUFFALDINO. I saw you from the window.

*Aside.*

I must find some excuse.

FLORINDO. And you begin with boiled meat instead of soup?

TRUFFALDINO. You must know, sir, at Venice soup is always taken last.

FLORINDO. I have other habits. I want my soup. Take that back to the kitchen.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir, as you wish, sir.

FLORINDO. Make haste; afterward I want to have a nap.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

*Makes as if going to the kitchen.*

FLORINDO, *aside*. Shall I never find Beatrice again?

FLORINDO *goes into the other room*. As soon as he is in,

TRUFFALDINO *quickly takes the dish in to* BEATRICE. *Enter*

FIRST WAITER *with another dish*. FLORINDO *calls from his room*.

FLORINDO. Truffaldino! Truffaldino! Am I always to be kept waiting?

TRUFFALDINO, *coming out of* BEATRICE'S room. Coming, sir.

*To* FIRST WAITER.

Quick, go and lay the table in that other room, the other gentleman has arrived; bring the soup at once.

FIRST WAITER. Directly.

*Exit* FIRST WAITER.

TRUFFALDINO. What may this dish be? This must be the "fricandeau."

*Tastes it.*

That's good, upon my word.

*Takes it in to* BEATRICE.

WAITERS *enter and carry glasses, wine, bread, etc., into* FLORINDO'S room.

TRUFFALDINO, *to* WAITERS. Good lads, that's right.

*Aside.*

They're as lively as kittens. Well, if I can manage to wait at table on two masters at once, 'twill be a great accomplishment indeed.

*The* WAITERS *come back out of* FLORINDO'S room *and go toward the kitchen.*

TRUFFALDINO. Hurry up, lads, the soup!

FIRST WAITER. You look after your own table; we'll take care of this one.

*Exeunt* WAITERS.

TRUFFALDINO. I want to look after both, if I can.

*Re-enter* FIRST WAITER *with* FLORINDO'S soup.

TRUFFALDINO. Here, give me that; I'll take it. Go and get the stuff for the other room.

*Takes soup from* FIRST WAITER *and carries it into* FLORINDO'S room.

FIRST WAITER. That's a strange fellow. He wants to wait on everyone. Let him. They will have to give me *my* tip all the same.

TRUFFALDINO *comes out of* FLORINDO'S room.

BEATRICE, *calling from her room.* Truffaldino!

FIRST WAITER, *to* TRUFFALDINO. Your master's calling.

TRUFFALDINO. Coming, sir.

*Goes into BEATRICE'S room.*

SECOND WAITER *brings the boiled meat for FLORINDO. TRUFFALDINO brings the dirty plates out of BEATRICE'S room.*

TRUFFALDINO. Here, give it to me.

*Exit SECOND WAITER.*

FLORINDO, *calls*. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO, *wishes to take the meat from WAITER. Give it to me.*

FIRST WAITER. No, I'm taking this.

TRUFFALDINO. Didn't you hear him call for me?

*Takes meat from him and carries it in to FLORINDO.*

FIRST WAITER. Well, that's fine! He wants to do everything.

SECOND WAITER *brings in a dish of rissoles, gives it to the FIRST WAITER and exit.*

I would take this in myself, but I don't want to have words with that fellow.

*Re-enter TRUFFALDINO from FLORINDO'S room with dirty plates.*

Here, master Jack-of-all-trades; take these rissoles to your master.

TRUFFALDINO, *takes dish*. Rissoles?

FIRST WAITER. Yes, the rissoles he ordered.

*Exit FIRST WAITER.*

TRUFFALDINO. Oh, fine! Now which table are these to go to?

I wonder which the devil of my two masters can have ordered them? If I go to the kitchen and ask, they'll begin to suspect; if I make a mistake and carry them to the one who didn't order them, then the other will ask for them and I shall be found out. I know what I'll do; I'll divide them on two plates, take half to each, and then I shall see who ordered them.

*Takes plates and divides the rissoles.*

That's four and that's four. There's one over. Who's to have that? We mustn't cause ill-feeling; I'll eat that one myself.

*Eats it.*

Now. We'll take the rissoles to this gentleman.



TRUFFALDINO *puts one plate of rissoles on the floor and takes the other in to BEATRICE. FIRST WAITER enters with an English pudding (trifle).*

FIRST WAITER. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO, *comes out of BEATRICE's room. Coming!*

FIRST WAITER. Take this pudding—

TRUFFALDINO. Wait a moment, I'm coming.

*Takes the other dish of rissoles and is going to FLORINDO's room.*

FIRST WAITER. That's not right, the rissoles belong there.

TRUFFALDINO. I know they do, sir; I have carried them there; and my master sends these four as a courtesy to this gentleman.

*Goes into FLORINDO's room.*

FIRST WAITER. I see, they know each other—friends, you might say? They might as well have dined together.

TRUFFALDINO, *re-entering*. What's this affair?

FIRST WAITER. That's an English pudding.

TRUFFALDINO. Who is it for?

FIRST WAITER. For your master.

*Exit FIRST WAITER.*

TRUFFALDINO. What the devil is this "pudding"? It smells delicious, and looks like polenta. Oh! If it is polenta, that would be good indeed. I'll taste it.

*Brings a fork out of his pocket and tries the pudding.*

It's not polenta, but it's very much like it.

*Eats.*

Much better than polenta.

*Goes on eating.*

BEATRICE, *calling*. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO, *with mouth full*. Coming, sir.

FLORINDO, *calling*. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO, *with mouth full*. Coming, sir.

*To himself.*

Oh what wonderful stuff! Just another mouthful and then I'll go.

*Goes on eating.*

BEATRICE comes out of her room, sees TRUFFALDINO eating, kicks him, and says:

BEATRICE. You come and wait on me.

*She goes back to her room.*

Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO. Coming!

TRUFFALDINO puts the pudding on the floor and goes into BEATRICE'S room. FLORINDO comes out of his.

FLORINDO, calling. Truffaldino! Where the devil is he?

TRUFFALDINO comes out of BEATRICE'S room.

TRUFFALDINO. Here, sir.

*Seeing FLORINDO.*

FLORINDO. What are you doing? Where have you been?

TRUFFALDINO. I just went to fetch the next course, sir.

FLORINDO. Is there anything more to eat?

TRUFFALDINO. I'll go and see.

FLORINDO. Make haste, I tell you, because I want to have a nap afterward.

*Goes back into his room.*

TRUFFALDINO. Very good, sir.

*Calling.*

Waiter, is there anything more to come?

*Aside.*

I'll put this pudding aside for myself.

*Hides it.*

*Enter FIRST WAITER with dish.*

FIRST WAITER. Here's the roast.

TRUFFALDINO, takes the roast. Quick, the dessert!

FIRST WAITER. Lord, what a fluster! In a minute.

*Exit FIRST WAITER.*

TRUFFALDINO. I'll take the roast to this gentleman.

*Takes it to FLORINDO.*

*Re-enter FIRST WAITER.*

FIRST WAITER, *with plate of fruit*. Here's the dessert; where are you?

TRUFFALDINO, *re-entering from FLORINDO'S room*. Here.

FIRST WAITER, *gives him the fruit*. There. Anything more?

TRUFFALDINO. Wait.

*Takes the dessert to BEATRICE.*

FIRST WAITER. He jumps about here and there like the devil himself.

TRUFFALDINO, *re-entering*. That will do. Nobody wants any more.

FIRST WAITER. I'm glad to hear it.

TRUFFALDINO. And now lay the table for *me*.

FIRST WAITER. In a moment.

*Exit FIRST WAITER.*

TRUFFALDINO. Now for my pudding! Hurrah! I've got through it all, they are all content, they want nothing more, they've had a very good dinner. I have waited at table on two masters at once, and neither of 'em knew anything about the other. But if I have waited for two, now I am going to eat for four.

### SCENE 3

#### *A Street with BRIGHELLA'S Inn*

*Enter SMERALDINA.*

SMERALDINA. A very proper sort of young lady my mistress is! To send me all alone with a letter to a tavern, a young girl like me! Waiting on a woman in love is a sad business. This young lady of mine does a thousand crazy things, and what I cannot understand is this—if she is so much in love with Signor Silvio as to be ready to disembowel herself for him, why does she send letters to another gentleman? One for summer and one for winter, I suppose! Well, there it is!

I am not going inside that tavern. I'll call; somebody will come out. Hey there! Anyone at home?

FIRST WAITER *comes out of the inn.*

FIRST WAITER. Now, young woman, what do you want?

SMERALDINA, *aside*. I feel thoroughly ashamed.

To WAITER.

Tell me—a certain Signor Federigo Rasponi lodges here, does he not?

FIRST WAITER. Yes, indeed. He has just this moment finished dinner.

SMERALDINA. I have something to say to him.

FIRST WAITER. A message? You can come inside.

SMERALDINA. And what sort of a girl do you take me for? I am the waiting maid of the lady he is to marry.

FIRST WAITER, *more politely*. Well then, pray step this way.

SMERALDINA. Oh, but I don't like to go in there.

FIRST WAITER. Do you expect me to bring him out into the street for you? That would not be at all the right thing; more especially as he has Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi with him.

SMERALDINA. What, my master? Worse and worse! I'll not come in.

FIRST WAITER. I can send his servant, if you like.

SMERALDINA. The little dark man?

FIRST WAITER. Exactly so.

SMERALDINA. Yes, do send him.

FIRST WAITER, *aside*. I understand. She fancies the little dark man, and is ashamed to come inside. She is not ashamed to be seen with him in the middle of the street.

*Goes in.*

SMERALDINA. If the master sees me, whatever shall I say? I'll tell him I came to look for *him*; that will do nicely. I'm never short of an answer.

*Enter TRUFFALDINO with a bottle in his hand, a glass and a napkin.*

TRUFFALDINO. Who sent for me?

SMERALDINA. I did, sir. I ask pardon if I have troubled you.  
TRUFFALDINO. Not a bit of it. I am here to receive your commands.

SMERALDINA. I fear I must have taken you from your dinner.

TRUFFALDINO. I was having dinner, but I can go back to it.

SMERALDINA. I am truly sorry.

TRUFFALDINO. I am delighted. The fact is, I have had my bellyful, and your bright eyes are just the right thing to make me digest it.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. Very gallant!

TRUFFALDINO. I'll just set down this bottle, and then I'm with you, my dear.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. He called me "my dear"!

*To* TRUFFALDINO.

My mistress sends this letter to Signor Federigo Rasponi; I do not like to come into the tavern, so I thought I might put you to this trouble, as you are his man.

TRUFFALDINO. I'll take it with pleasure; but first, you must know that I have a message for *you*.

SMERALDINA. From whom?

TRUFFALDINO. From a very honest man. Tell me, are you acquainted with one Truffaldin' Battocchio?

SMERALDINA. I think I have heard him spoken of, but I am not sure.

*Aside.*

It must be himself.

TRUFFALDINO. He's a good-looking man; short, thickset, with plenty of wit to his talk. Understands butlering too—

SMERALDINA. I don't know him from Adam.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, you do; and what's more, he's in love with you.

SMERALDINA. Oh! You are making fun of me.

TRUFFALDINO. And if he could only have just a little hope that his affections were returned, he would make himself known.

SMERALDINA. Well, sir, if I were to see him, and he took my



fancy, it might possibly be that I should return his affection.

TRUFFALDINO. Shall I show him to you?

SMERALDINA. I should like to see him.

TRUFFALDINO. Just a moment.

*Goes into the inn.*

SMERALDINA. Then 'tis not he.

TRUFFALDINO *comes out of the inn, makes low bows to SMERALDINA, passes close to her, sighs, and goes back into the inn.*

SMERALDINA. I do not understand this play-acting.

TRUFFALDINO, *re-entering*. Did you see him?

SMERALDINA. See whom?

TRUFFALDINO. The man who is in love with your beauty.

SMERALDINA. I saw no one but you.

TRUFFALDINO, *sighs*. Well!

SMERALDINA. It is you, then, who profess to be in love with me?

TRUFFALDINO. It is.

*Sighs.*

SMERALDINA. Why did you not say so before?

TRUFFALDINO. Because I am rather shy.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. He would make a stone fall in love with him.

TRUFFALDINO. Well, and what do you say?

SMERALDINA. I say—

TRUFFALDINO. Come, tell me.

SMERALDINA. Oh—I am rather shy too.

TRUFFALDINO. Then if we were joined up, 'twould be a marriage of two people who are rather shy.

SMERALDINA. I must say, you are just my fancy.

TRUFFALDINO. Are you a maid?

SMERALDINA. Need you ask?

TRUFFALDINO. I suppose that means "certainly not."

SMERALDINA. On the contrary, it means "certainly I am."

TRUFFALDINO. I am a bachelor too.

SMERALDINA. I could have been married fifty times, but I never found the man I really fancied.

TRUFFALDINO. Do you think there is any hope for me?

SMERALDINA. Well—to tell the truth—really—I must say—there's a—something about you— No, I won't say another word.

TRUFFALDINO. If somebody wanted to marry you, what would he have to do?

SMERALDINA. I have neither father nor mother. He would have to speak to my master, or to my mistress.

TRUFFALDINO. And if I speak to them, what will they say?

SMERALDINA. They will say, that if I am content—

TRUFFALDINO. And what will you say?

SMERALDINA. I shall say—that if they are content too—

TRUFFALDINO. That will do. We shall all be content. Give me the letter and when I bring you back the answer, we will have a talk.

SMERALDINA. Here's the letter.

TRUFFALDINO. Do you know what is in it?

SMERALDINA. No—if you only knew how curious I am to know!

TRUFFALDINO. I hope it is not a disdainful letter, or I shall get my face spoiled.

SMERALDINA. Who knows? It can't be a love letter.

TRUFFALDINO. I don't want to get into trouble. If I don't know what is in the letter, I am not going to take it.

SMERALDINA. We could open it—but how are we to seal it again?

TRUFFALDINO. Leave it to me; sealing letters is just my job. No one will ever know anything.

SMERALDINA. Then let us open it.

TRUFFALDINO. Can you read?

SMERALDINA. A little. But you can read quite well, I'm sure.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, I too can read just a little.

SMERALDINA. Then let us hear.

TRUFFALDINO. We must open it cleanly.

*Tears off a piece.*

SMERALDINA. Oh! What have you done?

TRUFFALDINO. Nothing. I've a secret way to mend it. Here it is, open.

SMERALDINA. Quick, read it.

TRUFFALDINO. *You read it.* You will know your young lady's handwriting better than I do.

SMERALDINA, *looking at the letter.* Really, I can't make out a word.

TRUFFALDINO, *same business.* Nor I neither.

SMERALDINA. Then what was the good of opening it?

TRUFFALDINO, *takes the letter.* Wait; let me think; I can make out some of it.

SMERALDINA. Oh I know some of the letters too.

TRUFFALDINO. Let us try one by one. Isn't that an M?

SMERALDINA. No! That's an R!

TRUFFALDINO. Between R and M there is very little difference.

SMERALDINA. *Ri, ri, o.* No, no; keep quiet; I think it is an M—  
*Mi, mi, o—mio!*

TRUFFALDINO. It's not *mio*, it's *mia*.

SMERALDINA. But it is, there's the hook—

TRUFFALDINO. That proves it is *mia*.

BEATRICE *comes out of the inn with* PANTALONE.

PANTALONE, *to* SMERALDINA. What are you doing here?

SMERALDINA, *frightened.* Nothing, sir; I came to look for *you*.

PANTALONE, *to* SMERALDINA. What do you want with me?

SMERALDINA. The mistress wants you, sir.

BEATRICE, *to* TRUFFALDINO. What is this paper?

TRUFFALDINO, *frightened.* Nothing, just a bit of paper—

BEATRICE. Let me see.

TRUFFALDINO, *gives paper, trembling.* Yes, sir.

BEATRICE. What? This is a letter addressed to me. Villain, will you open all my letters?

TRUFFALDINO. I know nothing about it, sir—

BEATRICE. Look, Signor Pantalone, here is a letter from Si-

gnora Clarice, in which she tells me of Silvio's insane jealousy—and this rascal has the impudence to open it!

PANTALONE, *to SMERALDINA*. And you helped him to do so?

SMERALDINA. I know nothing about it, sir.

BEATRICE. Who opened this letter?

TRUFFALDINO. Not I.

SMERALDINA. Nor I.

PANTALONE. Well, who brought it?

SMERALDINA. Truffaldino brought it to his master.

TRUFFALDINO. And Smeraldina brought it to Truffaldino.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. Sneak! I don't like you any more.

PANTALONE. You meddlesome little hussy, so you are the cause of all this trouble, are you? I've a good mind to smack your face.

SMERALDINA. I've never had my face smacked by any man; I'm surprised at you.

PANTALONE, *coming near her*. Is that the way you answer me?

SMERALDINA. You won't catch me. You're too rheumatic, you can't run.

*Exit running.*

PANTALONE. You saucy minx, I'll show you if I can run; I'll catch you.

*Runs after her.*

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. If I only knew how to get out of this!

BEATRICE, *looking at the letter, aside*. Poor Clarice! She is in despair over Silvio's jealousy; 'twill be best for me to discover myself and set her mind at rest.

TRUFFALDINO, *tries to steal away quietly*. I don't think he is looking. I'll try to get away.

BEATRICE. Where are you off to?

TRUFFALDINO. Nowhere.

*Stops.*

BEATRICE. Why did you open this letter?

TRUFFALDINO. It was Smeraldina; I had nothing to do with it.

BEATRICE. Smeraldina, forsooth! You did it, you rascal. One

and one make two. That's the second letter of mine you have opened today. Come here.

TRUFFALDINO, *approaching timidly*. Oh, for mercy's sake, sir—

BEATRICE. Come here, I say.

TRUFFALDINO, *same business*. Oh, for the love of Heaven—

BEATRICE *takes the stick which TRUFFALDINO has at his flank (i.e., Harlequin's wooden sword or baton) and beats him well, she standing with her back to the inn. FLORINDO appears at the window and sees the beating.*

FLORINDO. What's this? Beating my servant?

*Leaves window.*

TRUFFALDINO. Stop, stop, sir, for pity's sake.

BEATRICE. Take that, rascal, and learn to open my letters.

*Throws stick on the ground, and exit to street.*

TRUFFALDINO, *after BEATRICE has gone*. My blood! My body! Is that the way to treat a man of my sort? Beat a man like me? If a servant is no good, you can send him away, but you don't beat him.

FLORINDO *comes out, unseen by TRUFFALDINO*.

FLORINDO. What's that?

TRUFFALDINO, *seeing FLORINDO*. Oh! I said people had no business to beat other people's servants like that. This is an insult to my master.

*Looking toward direction of BEATRICE's exit.*

FLORINDO. Yes, 'tis an affront put upon *me*. Who was it gave you a thrashing?

TRUFFALDINO. I couldn't say, sir; I do not know him.

FLORINDO. Why did he thrash you?

TRUFFALDINO. Because I—I spat on his shoe.

FLORINDO. And you let yourself be beaten like that? Did nothing? Made no attempt to defend yourself? And you expose your master to insult, with perhaps serious consequences? Ass! Poltroon!

*Picks up the stick.*



Since you enjoy being thrashed, I'll give you your pleasure,  
I'll thrash you myself as well.

*Thrashes him and exit into inn.*

TRUFFALDINO. Well, there's no mistake about my being the  
servant of two masters. They have both paid me my wages.

*Exit into the inn.*

## ACT III

### SCENE 1

#### *A Room in BRIGHELLA'S Inn*

#### TRUFFALDINO *solus*

TRUFFALDINO. I don't care that for my beating! I have eaten well, I've dined well, and this evening I shall sup still better; and as long as I can serve two masters, there's this at least, that I draw double wages.

And now what's to be done? Master number one is out of doors, master number two is fast asleep; why, it's just the moment to give those clothes an airing—take them out of the trunks and see if there's anything wants doing. Here are the keys. This room will do nicely. I'll get the trunks out and make a proper job of it. I must have someone to help me though.

*Calls.*

Waiter!

*Enter WAITERS.*

FIRST WAITER. What do you want?

TRUFFALDINO. I want you to lend a hand to bring some trunks out of those rooms, to give the clothes an airing.

FIRST WAITER, *to* SECOND WAITER. Go and help him.

TRUFFALDINO, *to* SECOND WAITER. Come along, and I'll give you a good handful of what my masters gave me.

TRUFFALDINO *and* SECOND WAITER *go into* BEATRICE'S room.

FIRST WAITER. He looks like a rare good servant—quick, ready, and most attentive; but I'll warrant he has his faults somewhere. I've been a servant myself and I know the ropes. Nobody does anything just for love. Whatever they do,

either they are robbing their masters or they are throwing dust in their eyes.

TRUFFALDINO *comes out of the room with the SECOND WAITER carrying a trunk.*

TRUFFALDINO. Gently! Let's put it down here.

*They put the trunk in the middle of the room.*

Now let's fetch the other. But quietly, for my master is in there asleep.

TRUFFALDINO *and SECOND WAITER go into FLORINDO'S room.*

FIRST WAITER. Either he's a real first-rate fellow, or he's a real knave; I never saw anybody wait on two gentlemen at once like that. I shall just keep my eyes open; maybe, under the pretense of waiting on two gentlemen at once, he means to rob them both.

TRUFFALDINO *and SECOND WAITER re-enter with the other trunk.*

TRUFFALDINO. And we'll put this one here.

*They put it down a little way off from the other.*

To SECOND WAITER.

There! You can run along now, if you like. I don't want anything more.

FIRST WAITER, *to* SECOND WAITER. Go on; off with you to the kitchen.

*Exit* SECOND WAITER.

To TRUFFALDINO.

Can I help you?

TRUFFALDINO. No, thank you; I can do my work myself.

FIRST WAITER. I must say, you are a giant for work; it's a marvel to me how you get through it all.

*Exit* FIRST WAITER.

TRUFFALDINO. Now I'm going to do my work properly, in peace and quiet, with no one to worry me.

*Takes a key out of his pocket.*

Now which key is this, I wonder? Which trunk does it fit? Let's try.

*Opens one trunk.*

I guessed right at once. I'm the cleverest man on earth. And this other will open t'other trunk.

*Takes out second key and opens second trunk.*

Now they are both open. Let's take everything out.

*He takes all the clothes out of both trunks and puts them on the table. In each trunk there must be a black suit, books and papers, and anything else ad lib.*

I'll just see if there is anything in the pockets. You never know, sometimes they leave biscuits or sweets in them.

*Searches the pockets of BEATRICE's suit and finds a portrait.*

My word, what a pretty picture! There's a handsome man! Who can it be? A queer thing, I seem to know him, but yet I can't remember. He is just the least little bit like my other master; but no, *he* never wears clothes like that, nor that wig neither.

*FLORINDO calls from his room.*

FLORINDO. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO. Oh, plague take him! He has woken up. If the devil tempts him to come out and he sees this other trunk, he'll want to know—quick, quick—I'll lock it up and say I don't know whose it is.

*Begins putting clothes in again.*

FLORINDO, *calling*. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO. Coming, sir!

*Aside.*

I must put these things away first. But I can't remember which trunk this coat came from, nor these papers neither.

FLORINDO, *calling*. Come here, I say; or must I fetch a stick to you?

TRUFFALDINO. In a minute, sir.

*Aside.*

Quick, before he comes! I'll put all straight when he goes out.

*Stuffs the things into the trunks anyhow and locks them.*

*FLORINDO comes out in a dressing gown.*

FLORINDO. What the devil are you doing?

TRUFFALDINO. Pray, sir, didn't you tell me to give your clothes an airing? I was just about to do it here.

FLORINDO. And this other trunk, whose is that?

TRUFFALDINO. I couldn't say, sir; 'twill belong to some other gentleman.

FLORINDO. Give me my black coat.

TRUFFALDINO. Very good, sir.

*Opens FLORINDO's trunk and gives him the black suit. FLORINDO takes off his dressing gown with TRUFFALDINO's help and puts on the black coat; then puts his hand into the pockets and finds the portrait.*

FLORINDO, *much surprised*. What is this?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Oh Lord, I've made a mistake. I ought to have put it into the other gentleman's pocket. 'Tis the color made me go wrong.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Heavens! There can be no mistake. This is my own portrait; the one I gave to my beloved Beatrice.

*To TRUFFALDINO.*

Tell me, how ever did this portrait come to be in the pocket of my coat? It wasn't there before.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Now what's the answer to that? I don't know. Let me think—

FLORINDO. Come on, out with it, answer me. How did this portrait come to be in my pocket?

TRUFFALDINO. Sir, be kind and forgive me for taking a liberty. The portrait belongs to me, and I hid it there for safety, for fear I might lose it.

FLORINDO. How did you come by this portrait?

TRUFFALDINO. My master left it to me.

FLORINDO. Left it to you?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir; I had a master who died, and he left me a few trifles which I sold, all except this portrait, sir.

FLORINDO. Great heavens! And how long is it since this master of yours died?

TRUFFALDINO. 'Twill be just about a week ago, sir.

*Aside.*



I say the first thing that comes into my head.

FLORINDO. What was your master's name?

TRUFFALDINO. I do not know, sir; he lived incognito.

FLORINDO. Incognito? How long were you in his service?

TRUFFALDINO. Only a short time, sir; ten or twelve days.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Heavens! More and more do I fear that it was Beatrice. She escaped in man's dress; she concealed her name— Oh, wretched me, if it be true!

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. As he believes it all, I may as well go on with the fairy tale.

FLORINDO, *despairingly*. Tell me, was your master young?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir, quite a young gentleman.

FLORINDO. Without a beard?

TRUFFALDINO. Without a beard, sir.

FLORINDO, *aside, with a sigh*. 'Twas she, doubtless.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I hope I'm not in for another thrashing.

FLORINDO. At least, you know where your late master came from?

TRUFFALDINO. I did know, sir, but I can't now call it to mind.

FLORINDO. Was he from Turin?

TRUFFALDINO. Turin it was, sir.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Every word he speaks is a sword thrust in my heart.

To TRUFFALDINO.

Tell me again, this young gentleman from Turin, is he really dead?

TRUFFALDINO. He is dead indeed, sir.

FLORINDO. Of what did he die?

TRUFFALDINO. He met with an accident, and that was the end of him.

*Aside.*

That seems to be the best way out.

FLORINDO. Where was he buried?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I wasn't ready for that one.

To FLORINDO.

He wasn't buried, sir.

FLORINDO. What!

TRUFFALDINO. No, sir, another servant from the same place got permission to have him put into a coffin and sent home, sir.

FLORINDO. And was it, by any chance, the same servant who got you to fetch his letters for him from the Post this morning?

TRUFFALDINO. Exactly so, sir; it was Pasqual'.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Then all hope is lost. Beatrice is dead. Unhappy Beatrice! The discomforts of the journey and the tortures of her heart must have killed her. Oh! I can no longer endure the agony of my grief!

*Exit into his room.*

TRUFFALDINO. That portrait has touched him in the guts. He must have known the gentleman. Well, I had better take the trunks back to the rooms again, or I shall be in for more trouble of the same sort. Oh dear! Here comes my other master.

*Enter BEATRICE and PANTALONE.*

BEATRICE. I assure you, Signor Pantalone, the last consignment of mirrors and wax candles has been put down twice over.

PANTALONE. Maybe my young men have made a mistake. We will go through the books again, and then we shall find out exactly how things stand.

BEATRICE. I too have a list copied from my own books. We will compare them. Perhaps that may decide the point either in your favor or mine. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO. Here, sir.

BEATRICE. Have you the key of my trunk?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir; here it is.

BEATRICE. Why have you brought my trunk in here?

TRUFFALDINO. To air your clothes, sir.

BEATRICE. Have you aired them?

TRUFFALDINO. I have, sir.

BEATRICE. Open the trunk and give me— Whose is that other trunk?

TRUFFALDINO. It belongs to another gentleman who has just come.

BEATRICE. Give me the memorandum book which you will find there.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir.

*Aside.*

The Lord help me this time!

*Opens trunk and looks for the book.*

PANTALONE. As I say, they may have made a mistake; of course, if there is a mistake, you will not have to pay.

BEATRICE. We may find that all is in order; we shall see.

TRUFFALDINO. Is this the book, sir?

*Holding out a book to BEATRICE.*

BEATRICE. I expect so.

*Takes the book without looking carefully and opens it.*

No, this is not it— Whose is this book?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I've done it now!

BEATRICE, *aside*. These are two letters which I wrote to Florindo. Alas, these notes, these accounts belong to him. I tremble, I am in a cold sweat, I know not where I am.

PANTALONE. What ails you, Signor Federigo? Are you unwell?

BEATRICE. 'Tis nothing.

*Aside to TRUFFALDINO.*

Truffaldino, how did this book come to be in my trunk? It is not mine.

TRUFFALDINO. I hardly know, sir—

BEATRICE. Come, out with it—tell me the truth.

TRUFFALDINO. I ask your pardon for the liberty I took, sir, putting the book into your trunk. It belongs to me, and I put it there for safety.

*Aside.*

That was a good enough story for the other gentleman, I hope 'twill do for this one too.

BEATRICE. The book is your own, you say, and yet you gave it to me instead of mine, without noticing?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. He's much too clever.

To BEATRICE.

I'll tell you, sir; I have only had the book a very short time, so I did not recognize it at once.

BEATRICE. And how came you by this book?

TRUFFALDINO. I was in service with a gentleman at Venice, and he died and left the book to me.

BEATRICE. How long ago?

TRUFFALDINO. I don't remember exactly—ten or twelve days.

BEATRICE. How can that be, when I met you at Verona?

TRUFFALDINO. I had just come away from Venice on account of my poor master's death.

BEATRICE, *aside*. Alas for me!

To TRUFFALDINO.

Your master—was his name—Florindo?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir; Florindo.

BEATRICE. And his family name Aretusi?

TRUFFALDINO. That was it, sir; Aretusi.

BEATRICE. And you are sure he is dead?

TRUFFALDINO. As sure as I stand here.

BEATRICE. Of what did he die? Where was he buried?

TRUFFALDINO. He tumbled into the canal and was drowned and never seen again.

BEATRICE. Oh, wretched that I am! Florindo is dead, my beloved is dead; my one and only hope is dead. All is lost. Love's stratagems are fruitless! I leave my home, I leave my relatives, I dress as a man, I confront danger, I hazard my very life, all for Florindo—and Florindo is dead. Unhappy Beatrice! Was the loss of my brother so little to me that Fate must make me lose my lover as well? Oh! Grief overwhelms me, I can no longer bear the light of day. My adored one, my beloved, I will follow you to the tomb.

*Exit into her room, raving.*

PANTALONE, *who has listened to her speech with astonishment*.  
Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO. Si'or Pantalon'?

PANTALONE. A woman!

TRUFFALDINO. A female!

PANTALONE. Most extraordinary!

TRUFFALDINO. Who'd have thought it?

PANTALONE. I'm struck all of a heap.

TRUFFALDINO. You might knock me down with a feather.

PANTALONE. I shall go straight home and tell my daughter.

*Exit.*

TRUFFALDINO. It seems I am not the servant of two masters but of a master and a mistress.

*Exit.*

## SCENE 2

### *A Street*

*Enter DR. LOMBARDI meeting PANTALONE.*

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside*. This doddering old villain Pantalone sticks in my gizzard. The more I think about him, the more I abominate him.

PANTALONE, *cheerfully*. Good day, my dear Doctor, your servant.

DR. LOMBARDI. I am surprised that you have the effrontery to address me.

PANTALONE. I have news for you. Do you know—

DR. LOMBARDI. You are going to tell me that the marriage has already been performed? I care not a fig if it has.

PANTALONE. The whole story is untrue. Let me speak, plague take you.

DR. LOMBARDI. Speak on then, pox on you.

PANTALONE, *aside*. I should like to give him a good doctoring with my fists.



To DR. LOMBARDI.

My daughter shall marry your son whenever you please.

DR. LOMBARDI. I am vastly obliged to you. Pray do not put yourself to inconvenience. My son is not prepared to stomach that, sir. You may give her to the Turin gentleman.

PANTALONE. If you knew who the Turin gentleman is, you would say differently.

DR. LOMBARDI. He may be who he will. Your daughter has been seen with him, *et hoc sufficit*.

PANTALONE. But 'tis not true that he is—

DR. LOMBARDI. I will not hear another word.

PANTALONE. If you won't hear me, 'twill be the worse for you.

DR. LOMBARDI. We shall see for whom it will be the worse.

PANTALONE. My daughter is a girl of unblemished reputation, and—

DR. LOMBARDI. The devil take you.

PANTALONE. The devil take you, sir.

DR. LOMBARDI. You disreputable old villain!

*Exit* DR. LOMBARDI.

PANTALONE. Damn you! He is more like a beast than a man. Why, how could I ever tell him that the man was a woman? Not a bit of it, he wouldn't let me speak. But here comes that young lout of a son of his; now I shall be in for more impertinence.

*Enter* SILVIO.

SILVIO, *aside*. There is Pantalone. I should like to run a sword through his paunch.

PANTALONE. Signor Silvio, if you will give me leave, I should like to give you a piece of good news, if you will condescend to allow me to speak, and not behave like that windmill of a father of yours.

SILVIO. What have you to say to me? Pray speak, sir.

PANTALONE. You must know, sir, that the marriage of my daughter to Signor Federigo has come to nothing.

SILVIO. Indeed? Do not deceive me.

PANTALONE. 'Tis true indeed, and if you are still of your former mind, my daughter is ready to give you her hand.

SILVIO. Oh, heavens! You bring me back from death to life.

PANTALONE, *aside*. Well, well, he is not quite such a bear as his father.

SILVIO. But heavens! How can I clasp to my bosom her who has for so long been the bride of another?

PANTALONE. To cut a long story short, Federigo Rasponi has turned into Beatrice his sister.

SILVIO. What? I do not understand you.

PANTALONE. Then you are very thickheaded. The person whom we thought to be Federigo has been discovered to be Beatrice.

SILVIO. Dressed as a man?

PANTALONE. Dressed as a man.

SILVIO. At last I understand.

PANTALONE. About time you did.

SILVIO. How did it happen? Tell me.

PANTALONE. Let us go to my house. My daughter knows nothing of it. I need only tell the story once to satisfy you both.

SILVIO. I will come, sir; and I most humbly beg your forgiveness, for having allowed myself to be transported by passion—

PANTALONE. 'Twas a mere nothing; I appreciate your feelings. I know what love is. Now, my dear boy, come along with me.

*Going.*

SILVIO, *aside*. Who is happier than I am? What heart could be more contented?

*Exit with* PANTALONE.

### SCENE 3

#### *A Room in BRIGHELLA'S Inn*

BEATRICE and FLORINDO come out of their rooms simultaneously; each holds a sword or dagger and is on the point of

*committing suicide. BRIGHELLA is restraining BEATRICE and the FIRST WAITER restraining FLORINDO. They all come forward in such a way that BEATRICE and FLORINDO are unaware of each other's presence.*

BRIGHELLA, *seizing BEATRICE's hand.* Stop, stop!

BEATRICE, *trying to break loose.* For pity's sake, let me go.

FIRST WAITER, *holding FLORINDO.* This is madness.

FLORINDO, *breaks away from WAITER.* Go to the devil.

BEATRICE, *breaking away from BRIGHELLA.* You shall not hinder me.

*Both come forward, determined to kill themselves, they see each other, recognize each other, and stand dazed.*

FLORINDO. What do I see?

BEATRICE. Florindo!

FLORINDO. Beatrice!

BEATRICE. Are you alive?

FLORINDO. Are you too living?

BEATRICE. Oh, destiny!

FLORINDO. Oh, my adored one!

*They drop their weapons and embrace.*

BRIGHELLA, *jokingly to the WAITER.* You had better mop up the blood; we don't want a mess here.

*Exit BRIGHELLA.*

FIRST WAITER, *aside.* Anyway I'll pick up the weapons and I shall not give them back again.

*Picks up the daggers and exit.*

FLORINDO. What brought you to attempt such an act of madness?

BEATRICE. The false news of your death.

FLORINDO. Who told you that I was dead?

BEATRICE. My servant.

FLORINDO. And mine gave me to believe that you were dead; and I too, carried away by the same agony of grief, intended to take my life.

BEATRICE. It was this book caused me to believe the story.

*Not a  
comedian  
scene at*

FLORINDO. That book was in my trunk. How came it into your hands? Ah, now I know. By the same means, no doubt, as the portrait I found in my coat pocket. Here it is. The one I gave you at Turin.

BEATRICE. Those rascally servants of ours— Heaven only knows what they have been up to.

FLORINDO. Where are they, I wonder?

BEATRICE. Nowhere to be seen.

FLORINDO. Let us find them and confront them.

*Calling.*

Ho there! Is nobody there?

*Enter BRIGHELLA.*

BRIGHELLA. Did you call, sir?

FLORINDO. Where are our servants?

BRIGHELLA. I don't know, sir. Shall I send to look for them?

FLORINDO. Find them at once if you can and send them to us here.

BRIGHELLA. For myself I only know one of them; I will ask the waiters, they will know them both. I congratulate you, sir, and madam, on having made such a satisfactory end of yourselves; if you want to get yourselves buried, you must try some other establishment; that's more than *we* can undertake. Your servant, madam and sir.

*Exit BRIGHELLA.*

FLORINDO. Then you too are lodged in this inn?

BEATRICE. I arrived this morning.

FLORINDO. I too this morning. And yet we never saw each other.

BEATRICE. Fate has been pleased to torment us a little.

FLORINDO. Tell me: your brother Federigo—is he dead?

BEATRICE. Have you any doubt? He died on the spot.

FLORINDO. I was told he was alive and here in Venice.

BEATRICE. It was I who traveled in his name and in these clothes to follow—

FLORINDO. To follow me—I know, my dearest; I read it in a letter from your servant at Turin.

BEATRICE. How came it into your hands?

FLORINDO. My servant gave it me by mistake and seeing it was addressed to you, I could not help opening it.

BEATRICE. I suppose a lover's curiosity is always legitimate.

FLORINDO. But where are these servants of ours? Ah!

*Sees TRUFFALDINO approaching.*

Here is one.

BEATRICE. He looks like the worse knave of the two.

FLORINDO. I think you are not far wrong.

*Enter TRUFFALDINO brought in by force by BRIGHELLA and the FIRST WAITER.*

FLORINDO. Come here, come here, don't be frightened.

BEATRICE. We shall do you no harm.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. H'm, I still remember the thrashing.

BRIGHELLA. We have found this one; if we can find the other, we will bring him.

FLORINDO. Yes, we *must* have them both here together.

BRIGHELLA, *aside to WAITER*. Do you know the other?

FIRST WAITER, *to BRIGHELLA*. Not I.

BRIGHELLA. We'll ask in the kitchen. Someone there will know him.

FIRST WAITER. If he had been there, I should have known him too.

*Exeunt FIRST WAITER and BRIGHELLA.*

FLORINDO, *to TRUFFALDINO*. Come, now, tell us what happened about that changing of the portrait and the book, and why you and that other rascal conspired to drive us distracted.

TRUFFALDINO, *signs to both with his finger to keep silence.*

Hush!

*To FLORINDO.*

Pray, sir, a word with you in private.

*To BEATRICE just as he turns to speak to FLORINDO.*

I will tell you everything directly.

*To FLORINDO.*

You must know, sir, I am not to blame for anything that



has happened; it's all Pasqual's fault, the servant of that lady there.

*Cautiously pointing at* BEATRICE.

It was he mixed up the things, and put into one trunk what belonged to the other, without my knowledge. The poor man begged and prayed me to take the blame, for fear his master should send him away, and as I am a kindhearted fellow that would let himself be drawn and quartered for his friends, I made up all these stories to see if I could help him. I never dreamed it was a portrait of you or that you would be so much upset at hearing of the death of the owner. Now I have told you the whole truth, sir, as an honest man and a faithful servant.

BEATRICE, *aside*. 'Tis a very long story he is telling. I am curious to know what the mystery is about.

FLORINDO, *aside to* TRUFFALDINO. Then the man who got you to fetch that letter from the Post was the servant of Signora Beatrice?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to* FLORINDO. Yes, sir, that was Pasqual'.

FLORINDO. Then why conceal from me a fact I so urgently desired to know?

TRUFFALDINO. He begged me not to tell anyone, sir.

FLORINDO. Who?

TRUFFALDINO. Pasqual'.

FLORINDO. Why didn't you obey your master?

TRUFFALDINO. For the love of Pasqual'.

FLORINDO. You and Pasquale deserve a sound thrashing together.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to himself*. In that case I should get both.

BEATRICE. Have you not yet finished this long cross-examination?

FLORINDO. This fellow has been telling me—

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to* FLORINDO. For the love of Heaven, your honor, do not say it was Pasqual'. I'd rather you told the lady it was me. You can give me a beating if you like, but don't, don't let any trouble come to Pasqual'.

FLORINDO, *aside to* TRUFFALDINO. Are you so devoted a friend to Pasquale?

TRUFFALDINO. I love him as if he were my very own self. Now I am going to the lady, and I am going to tell her that it was all my fault; she may scold me as she pleases and do what she will to me, but I *will* protect Pasqual'.

TRUFFALDINO *moves toward* BEATRICE.

FLORINDO, *aside*. Well, he's certainly a very loyal and affectionate character.

TRUFFALDINO, *to* BEATRICE. Here I am, madam.

BEATRICE, *aside to* TRUFFALDINO. What is all this long story you've been telling Signor Florindo?

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to* BEATRICE. You must know, madam, that that gentleman has a servant called Pasqual'; he is the most arrant noddy in the world; it was he made all that mess of things; but because the poor man was afraid his master would send him away, I made up all the story about the book and the master who was dead and drowned, and all the rest of it. And just now I've been telling Si'or Florindo that I was the cause of it all.

BEATRICE. But why accuse yourself of faults which you have never committed?

TRUFFALDINO. Madam, 'tis all for the love I bear Pasqual'.

FLORINDO, *aside*. This seems a very long business.

TRUFFALDINO, *to* BEATRICE *as before*. Dear madam, I beg of you, don't get him into trouble.

BEATRICE. Whom?

TRUFFALDINO. Pasqual'.

BEATRICE. Pasquale and you are a pretty pair of rascals.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to himself*. I fear I'm the only one.

FLORINDO. Come. That's enough. Signora Beatrice, our servants certainly deserve to be punished; but in consideration of our own great happiness, we surely may forgive what is past.

BEATRICE. True; but your servant—

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to* BEATRICE. For the love of Heaven don't mention Pasqual'.

BEATRICE, *to* FLORINDO. Well, I must go and call upon Signor Pantalone dei Bisognosi; will you accompany me?

FLORINDO. I would do so with pleasure, but I have to wait here and see my banker. I will come later, if you are in haste.

BEATRICE. I am, I must go at once. I shall expect you at Signor Pantalone's; and shall stay there till you come.

FLORINDO. I don't know where he lives.

TRUFFALDINO. I know, sir, I'll show you the way.

BEATRICE. Very well, and now I must go to my room and tidy myself up.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to BEATRICE*. Very good, madam; I am at your service directly.

BEATRICE. Dear Florindo! What torments have I not endured for love of you!

BEATRICE *goes into her room*.

FLORINDO. Mine have been no less.

TRUFFALDINO. Sir, Pasqual' is not here, and Si'ora Beatrice has no one to help her dress; will you give me leave to wait upon her instead of Pasqual'?

FLORINDO. Yes, by all means. Wait upon her with diligence; I am delighted.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. For invention, for promptness and for intrigue I will challenge the attorney general.

TRUFFALDINO *goes into BEATRICE'S room*.

FLORINDO. What strange things have happened in the course of this one day! Tears, lamentations, and anguish, and then at last consolation and happiness. From tears to laughter is a happy step, which makes us forget our agonies, but when we pass from pleasure to pain the change is even yet more acutely perceptible.

*Re-enter BEATRICE followed by TRUFFALDINO.*

BEATRICE. Here I am, have I not been quick?

FLORINDO. When will you change these clothes?

BEATRICE. Do I not look well in them?

FLORINDO. I long to see you in a woman's dress. Your beauties ought not to be so completely disguised.

BEATRICE. Well, I shall expect you at Signor Pantalone's; make Truffaldino show you the way.

FLORINDO. I must wait for the banker; if he does not come soon another time will do.

BEATRICE. Show me your love in your anxiety to attend me.  
*About to go.*

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to BEATRICE*. Do you wish me to stay and wait upon this gentleman?

BEATRICE. Yes, you will show him the way to Signor Pantalone's.

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, madam, certainly, as Pasqual' is not here.

BEATRICE. Wait upon him, I shall be pleased indeed.

*Aside to herself.*

I love him more than my very self.

*Exit BEATRICE.*

TRUFFALDINO. The fellow's nowhere to be seen. His master wants to dress, and he goes out on his own and is nowhere to be found.

FLORINDO. Of whom are you speaking?

TRUFFALDINO. Of Pasqual'. I love him, he is a good friend of mine, but he's a lazy dog. Now I am a servant worth two.

FLORINDO. Come and dress my wig. The banker will be here directly.

TRUFFALDINO. Please your honor, I hear your honor has to go to Si'or Pantalon's.

FLORINDO. Yes, what then?

TRUFFALDINO. I want to ask a favor of you.

FLORINDO. Well, you deserve it after all you have done.

TRUFFALDINO. If there has been any trouble, you know, sir, 'tis all the fault of Pasqual'.

FLORINDO. But where on earth is this cursed Pasquale? Can't one see him?

TRUFFALDINO. He'll come, the knave. And so, sir, I want to ask you this favor.

FLORINDO. What do you want?

TRUFFALDINO. You see, sir, I'm in love too.

FLORINDO. In love?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir, and my young woman is maidserv-

ant to Si'or Pantalon'; and it would be very kind if your honor—

FLORINDO. How do I come into it?

TRUFFALDINO. I won't say, sir, that you come into it; but I being your servant, you might say a word for me to Si'or Pantalon'.

FLORINDO. We must see first whether the girl wants you.

TRUFFALDINO. The girl wants me, no mistake. All I want is a word to Si'or Pantalon'; I beg you, sir, of your charity.

FLORINDO. Certainly, I will speak for you, but how can you keep a wife?

TRUFFALDINO. I shall do what I can. I shall ask for help from Pasqual'.

FLORINDO. You had better ask help from someone with more sense.

FLORINDO *goes into his room.*

TRUFFALDINO. Well, if I don't show sense this time, I shall never show it again.

TRUFFALDINO *follows FLORINDO into his room.*

#### SCENE 4

#### *A Room in the House of PANTALONE*

PANTALONE, *the* DOCTOR, CLARICE, SILVIO *and*  
SMERALDINA

PANTALONE. Come, Clarice, pull yourself together. You see that Signor Silvio has repented and asks your forgiveness. If he acted foolishly, it was all for love of you; I have forgiven him his extravagances, you ought to forgive him too.

SILVIO. Measure my agony by your own, Signora Clarice, and rest assured that I most truly love you, since 'twas the fear of losing you that rendered me distracted. Heaven desires our happiness; do not be ungrateful for the blessings of



Providence. Do not let the idea of revenge spoil the most beautiful day of your life.

DR. LOMBARDI. I join my prayers to those of my son; Signora Clarice, my dear daughter-in-law, have pity on the poor young man; he nearly went out of his mind.

SMERALDINA. Come, dear madam, what would you? Men are all cruel to us, some more, some less. They demand the most absolute fidelity, and on the least shadow of suspicion they bully us, ill-treat us and are like to murder us. Well, you have got to marry one or another of them some day, so I say to you as one says to sick people—since you have got to take your nasty medicine, take it.

PANTALONE. There, do you hear that? Smeraldina calls matrimony medicine. You must not think it is poison.

*Aside to DR. LOMBARDI.*

We must try to cheer her up.

DR. LOMBARDI. Certainly, 'tis not poison, nor even nasty medicine. Matrimony is a lollipop, a jujube, a lozengel

SILVIO. But dear Clarice, won't you say a word? I know I deserve to be punished by you, but, of your mercy, punish me with hard words rather than with silence. Behold me at your feet; have pity upon me.

CLARICE, *to SILVIO with a sigh*. Cruel!

PANTALONE, *aside to DR. LOMBARDI*. You heard that little sigh? A good sign.

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to SILVIO*. Strike while the iron is hot.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. A sigh is like lightning; it promises rainfall.

SILVIO. If I could think that you desired my blood to avenge my supposed cruelty, I give it you with all my heart. But, oh God! instead of the blood of my veins, accept, I beg you, that which gushes from my eyes.

*Weeps.*

PANTALONE. Bravo! Bravo! Well said!

DR. LOMBARDI. Capital! Capital!

CLARICE, *sighing as before, but more tenderly*. Cruel!

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to PANTALONE*. She's done to a turn.

PANTALONE. Here, come up with you.

*He raises SILVIO, takes him by the hand.*

Stand over there.

*Takes CLARICE's hand.*

And you come here too, madam. Now, join your hands together again; and make peace. So no more tears, be happy, no more nonsense and Heaven bless you both.

DR. LOMBARDI. There; 'tis done.

SMERALDINA. 'Tis done, 'tis done.

SILVIO, *holding CLARICE's hand*. Oh, Signora Clarice, for pity's sake—

CLARICE. Ungrateful!

SILVIO. Dearest!

CLARICE. Inhuman!

SILVIO. Beloved!

CLARICE. Monster!

SILVIO. Angell

CLARICE, *sighs*. Ah!

PANTALONE, *aside*. Going, going—

SILVIO. Forgive me, for the love of Heaven.

CLARICE, *sighs*. I forgive you.

PANTALONE, *aside*. Gone!

DR. LOMBARDI. Come, Silvio, she has forgiven you.

SMERALDINA. The patient is ready; give her her medicine.

*Enter BRIGHELLA.*

BRIGHELLA. By your leave, sir, may I come in?

PANTALONE. Pray come in, good friend Brighella. 'Twas you, was it not, that told me all these pretty stories, who assured me that that party was Signor Federigo—eh?

BRIGHELLA. My dear sir, who would not have been deceived? They were twin brother and sister, as like as two peas. In those clothes I would have wagered my head that it was he.

PANTALONE. Enough. That's all done with. What is the news?

BRIGHELLA. Signora Beatrice is here, and desires to pay her respects.

PANTALONE. Let her come in; she is most welcome.

CLARICE. Poor Signora Beatrice, I am happy to think that her troubles are over.

SILVIO. You are sorry for her?

CLARICE. I am indeed.

SILVIO. And for me?

CLARICE. Oh, cruel!

PANTALONE, *aside to* DR. LOMBARDI. You hear these loving words?

DR. LOMBARDI, *aside to* PANTALONE. Ah, my son has a way with him.

PANTALONE. My daughter, poor dear child, has a very good heart.

SMERALDINA. Yes, they will both of them do their duty by each other.

*Enter* BEATRICE.

BEATRICE. Ladies and gentlemen, I come to ask your pardon and forgiveness, that you should on my account have been put to inconvenience—

CLARICE. No, no, my dear; come to me.

*Embraces her.*

SILVIO, *annoyed at the embrace*. How now?

BEATRICE, *to* SILVIO. What! May she not even embrace a woman?

SILVIO, *aside*. 'Tis those clothes again.

PANTALONE. Well, well, Signora Beatrice, I must say, for a young woman of your age you have a wonderful courage.

DR. LOMBARDI, *to* BEATRICE. Too much spirit, madam.

BEATRICE. Love makes one do great things.

PANTALONE. And you have found your young gentleman at last? So I hear.

BEATRICE. Yes, Heaven has made us happy.

DR. LOMBARDI. A nice reputation you have made yourself!

BEATRICE. Sir, you have no business with my affairs.

SILVIO, *to* DR. LOMBARDI. Sir, I beg you, let everyone do as they will; do not be so put out about it. Now that I am happy,

I want all the world to be happy too. Is anyone else going to be married? Let them all get married!

SMERALDINA, *to* SILVIO. What about me, sir?

SILVIO. Whom are you going to marry?

SMERALDINA. The first man that comes along, sir.

SILVIO. Find him then, here am I.

CLARICE, *to* SILVIO. You? What for?

SILVIO. To give her a wedding present.

CLARICE. That is no affair of yours.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. She's afraid everybody will eat him. She likes the taste of him, I see.

*Enter* TRUFFALDINO.

TRUFFALDINO. My respects to the company.

BEATRICE, *to* TRUFFALDINO. Where is Signor Florindo?

TRUFFALDINO. He is here and would like to come in, by your leave.

BEATRICE. Signor Pantalone, will you give Signor Florindo leave?

PANTALONE. Is that your young gentleman?

BEATRICE. He is going to marry me.

PANTALONE. I shall be pleased to meet him.

BEATRICE, *to* TRUFFALDINO. Show him in.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside to* SMERALDINA. Young woman, my respects to you.

SMERALDINA, *aside to* TRUFFALDINO. Pleased to see you, my little darkie.

TRUFFALDINO. We will have a talk.

SMERALDINA. What about?

TRUFFALDINO, *makes as though giving her a wedding ring*. Are you willing?

SMERALDINA. Why not?

TRUFFALDINO. We'll have a talk.

*Exit* TRUFFALDINO.

SMERALDINA, *to* CLARICE. Madam, with the company's leave, I want a favor of you.

CLARICE, *going aside to listen to SMERALDINA*. What is it?

SMERALDINA, *to CLARICE*. I too am a poor young girl that would like to settle myself; there's the servant of Signora Beatrice who wants to marry me; now if you would say a kind word to his mistress, and get her to allow him to take me to wife, I should be the happiest girl in the world.

CLARICE. Dear Smeraldina, with all the pleasure in life; as soon as I can speak freely to Beatrice, I will certainly do so.

PANTALONE, *to CLARICE*. What is all this whispering about?

CLARICE. Nothing, sir. She had something to say to me.

SILVIO, *to CLARICE*. May I not know?

CLARICE. How inquisitive they all are! And then they talk about us women!

*Enter FLORINDO shown in by TRUFFALDINO.*

FLORINDO. Your most humble servant, ladies and gentlemen.

*All bow and curtsy.*

*To PANTALONE.*

Are you the master of the house, sir?

PANTALONE. Yours to command, sir.

FLORINDO. Allow me, sir, to have the honor of waiting upon you this evening; I present myself by command of the Signora Beatrice, whose adventures will be known to you, and mine too.

PANTALONE. I am happy to know you, sir, and to see you here; I congratulate you most heartily on your good fortune.

FLORINDO. Signora Beatrice is to be my wife, and if you will not disdain to do us the honor, I hope you will give away the bride.

PANTALONE. Whatever has to be done, let it be done at once. Give her your hand.

FLORINDO. Signora Beatrice, I am willing.

BEATRICE. Here is my hand, Signor Florindo.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. They don't want pressing.

PANTALONE. Afterward we will settle up our accounts. You will put yours in order; then we will settle ours.

CLARICE, *to BEATRICE*. Dear friend, I congratulate you.



BEATRICE, *to* CLARICE. And I you, with all my heart.

SILVIO, *to* FLORINDO. Sir, do you know me again?

FLORINDO, *to* SILVIO. Indeed I do, sir; you would have provoked me to a duel.

SILVIO. 'Twas to my own disaster. Here is the adversary  
*Pointing to* BEATRICE.

who disarmed me and very nearly killed me.

BEATRICE. And gave you your life too, you might say.

SILVIO. 'Tis true.

CLARICE. At my entreaty.

SILVIO. That is very true.

PANTALONE. Everything is in order, everything is settled.

TRUFFALDINO. The best is yet to come, ladies and gentlemen.

PANTALONE. What is yet to come?

TRUFFALDINO, *to* FLORINDO, *taking him apart*. With your good leave, sir, one word.

FLORINDO. What do you want?

TRUFFALDINO. You remember what you promised me, sir?

FLORINDO. What did I promise? I do not recollect.

TRUFFALDINO. To ask Si'or Pantalon' for Smeraldina as my wife.

FLORINDO. Of course, now I remember; I will do so at once.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. I, too, poor man, want to put myself right with the world.

FLORINDO. Signor Pantalone, although this is the first occasion on which I have had the honor of knowing you, I make bold to desire a favor of you.

PANTALONE. You may command me, sir; I will serve you to the best of my powers.

FLORINDO. My manservant desires to marry your maid; have you any objection to giving your consent?

SMERALDINA, *aside*. Wonderful! Here's another who wants to marry me! Who the devil can he be? I wish I knew him.

PANTALONE. For my part I am agreed.

*To* SMERALDINA.

What say you, girl?

SMERALDINA. If I thought he would make a good husband—

PANTALONE. Is he a good honest man, this servant of yours?

FLORINDO. For the short time he has been with me he has certainly proved himself trusty, and he seems to be intelligent.

CLARICE. Signor Florindo, you have anticipated me in something that *I* ought to have done. I was to propose the marriage of my maid with the manservant of Signora Beatrice. You have asked for her for *your* servant, I can say no more.

FLORINDO. No, no; since you so earnestly desire this, I withdraw altogether and leave you completely free.

CLARICE. Indeed, sir, I could never permit myself to have my own wishes preferred to yours. Besides, I must admit that I am not fully authorized. Pray continue in your proposal.

FLORINDO. You say so out of courtesy, madam. Signor Pantalone, I withdraw all that I have said. I will not say another word on behalf of my servant; on the contrary, I am absolutely opposed to his marrying her.

CLARICE. If *your* man is not to marry her, no more shall the other man. We must be fair on both sides.

TRUFFALDINO, *aside*. Here's a state of things! They pay each other compliments, and meanwhile I am left without a wife at all.

SMERALDINA, *aside*. It looks as if I should have neither one nor the other.

PANTALONE. Come, we *must* settle it somehow; this poor girl wants to get married, let us give her either to the one or the other.

FLORINDO. Not to *my* man. Nothing shall induce me to do Signora Clarice an injustice.

CLARICE. Nor will I ever tolerate an injustice to Signor Florindo.

TRUFFALDINO. Sir, madam, I can settle the matter myself.

*With his usual air of great ingenuity.*

Si'or Florindo, did you not ask the hand of Smeraldina for your servant?

FLORINDO. I did; did you not hear me?

TRUFFALDINO. And you, Si'ora Clarice, did you not intend Smeraldina to marry the servant of Si'ora Beatrice?

CLARICE. Most certainly I was to do so.

TRUFFALDINO. Good; then if that is so, give me your hand, Smeraldina.

PANTALONE. And pray what right have *you* to ask for her hand?

TRUFFALDINO. Because I am the servant of Si'or Florindo and of Si'ora Beatrice too.

FLORINDO. What?

BEATRICE. What do you say?

TRUFFALDINO. Pray be calm. Si'or Florindo, who asked you to ask Si'or Pantalon' for Smeraldina?

FLORINDO. You did.

TRUFFALDINO. And you, Si'ora Clarice, whom had you in mind as the intended husband of Smeraldina?

CLARICE. Yourself.

TRUFFALDINO. *Ergo*, Smeraldina is mine.

FLORINDO. Signora Beatrice, where is your servant?

BEATRICE. Why, here! Truffaldino, of course.

FLORINDO. Truffaldino? He is *my* servant!

BEATRICE. Is not yours called Pasquale?

FLORINDO. Pasquale? I thought Pasquale was *yours*!

BEATRICE, *to* TRUFFALDINO. How do you explain this?

TRUFFALDINO *makes silent gestures asking for forgiveness.*

FLORINDO. You rascal!

BEATRICE. You knave!

FLORINDO. So you waited on two masters at once?

TRUFFALDINO. Yes, sir, I did, that was the very trick. I took on the job without thinking; just to see what I could do. It did not last long, 'tis true; but at any rate I can boast that nobody would ever have found me out, if I had not given myself away for love of this girl here. I have done a hard day's work, and I dare say I had my shortcomings, but I hope that in consideration of the fun of the thing, all these ladies and gentlemen will forgive me.

# MIRANDOLINA

[LA LOCANDIERA]

Carlo Goldoni

*English Version by Lady Augusta Gregory*

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## PERSONS

MARQUIS OF FORLIPOPOLI

COUNT OF ALBAFIORITA

CAPTAIN RIPAFRATTA

MIRANDOLINA, *an innkeeper*

FABRIZIO, *servant at the inn*

CAPTAIN'S SERVANT

*The scene is laid in Florence.*



## ACT I

### SCENE 1

*Large room at an inn, with rough furniture and three doors.*

COUNT and MARQUIS.

MARQUIS. There is some difference, Count, between you and myself!

COUNT. How do you make that out?

MARQUIS. Are you setting yourself up to be my equal?

COUNT. My money is worth as much as yours . . . at an inn.

MARQUIS. I am the Marquis of Forlipopolis!

COUNT. And I am the Count of Albafiorita!

MARQUIS. You only got your title through buying an estate.

COUNT. If I bought my estate, you sold yours.

MARQUIS. I should be treated with respect.

COUNT. Who is showing you disrespect?

MARQUIS. What is keeping you at this inn?

COUNT. The same thing that keeps yourself.

MARQUIS. I don't know what you're talking about.

COUNT. I am talking of Mirandolina.

MARQUIS. Mirandolina! The innkeeper! What have you to do with her?

COUNT. That's a good joke! You think no one but yourself may look at Mirandolina!

MARQUIS. She will never look at you while she has a chance of a marquis.

COUNT. What is a marquis against money? In these times a handle to the name counts less than pence in the pocket.

MARQUIS. I'll back my rank against your riches.

COUNT. It isn't riches I think of, but what they will buy.

MARQUIS. Go on buying till you break your neck! You won't

be able to do anything with her. She doesn't care *that* for you.

*Snaps his fingers.*

COUNT, *sarcastically*. I won't, and you will!

MARQUIS. I am what I am!

COUNT. I have what I have! She sees more of my money than of yours.

MARQUIS. I don't go about talking of what I do.

COUNT. Everybody knows what you *don't* do. Even the servants are talking about it.

MARQUIS. Servants! I suppose you mean that low fellow Fabrizio. . . . I have my suspicions of him.

COUNT. I think I hear him outside.

*Opens the door and calls.*

Fabrizio!

FABRIZIO, *coming in*. What is it you are wanting, sir?

COUNT. What way is the little missis today?

FABRIZIO. She is well, sir.

MARQUIS. Is she in the house?

FABRIZIO. She is, sir.

COUNT. Ask her to come here. I want to speak to her.

FABRIZIO. I will, sir.

*Goes.*

MARQUIS. What do you want with her?

COUNT. Don't you know it's her birthday? Mirandolina comes of age today.

MARQUIS. What's that to you?

COUNT. I'm going to give her a birthday present . . . aren't you?

MARQUIS. It's worth more to her than presents that I patronize her inn: I bring it into fashion.

COUNT, *tossing a handful of money*. I bring it what is better!

MARQUIS. You don't understand what you're talking about.

COUNT. You are talking nonsense.

MARQUIS. Hold your tongue, sir.

COUNT. Hold your own!

CAPTAIN, *coming in*. What's all this noise about? Are you quarreling?

COUNT. Only arguing.

CAPTAIN. What on earth about?

COUNT. Something you would laugh at.

MARQUIS. It's no laughing matter!

COUNT. The marquis has taken a fancy to our landlady.

MARQUIS. I am only thinking of her interests.

COUNT. He thinks of them. . . . I spend for them.

CAPTAIN. I never heard of anything so little worth a quarrel.

To grow angry about a woman! To lose one's temper about a woman! Whoever heard of such a thing? I will never have words with anyone about a woman. I have never looked at one, and never thought much of any one of them. A weakness for woman is a ridiculous thing.

MARQUIS. For all that, there is something very taking about Mirandolina.

COUNT. The marquis is right. Our landlady is a very charming little thing.

MARQUIS. You may be sure any woman *I* lose my heart to must be something out of the common.

CAPTAIN. Stuff and nonsense! What could there be out of the common in a woman of that sort?

MARQUIS. She has a very taking manner.

COUNT. She is pretty and very conversable; she dresses with very good taste.

CAPTAIN. All things that are not worth twopence. I have been three days in this inn and I give you my word I wouldn't know her if I met her in the street.

COUNT. Take a look at her, and she may make an impression on you yet.

CAPTAIN. Rubbish: I've seen her well enough; she's like any other woman.

MARQUIS. She is not like any other woman. She is something more than others. I have known ladies in the best society, and I give you my word I've never met her equal.

COUNT. I know women well enough. I know them and their follies. But I tell you in spite of the length of time I have been running after Mirandolina and all the money I have spent, I haven't so much as touched her little finger.

CAPTAIN. Tricks, all tricks. You are fools to be taken in by her. She would never try her tricks on me! Believe me, all women are the same in the long run. They don't know anything. They are no use, and I don't like them.

COUNT. You have never been in love.

CAPTAIN. Never, and never will be. My people have worked heaven and earth to make me marry, but I never would give in to it.

MARQUIS. But you are the only one of your family. Don't you think it a pity your property should go to strangers?

CAPTAIN. I do think it. But whenever I remember that to have an heir I must put up with a wife, I banish the thought quickly enough.

COUNT. And what will you do with all your money?

CAPTAIN. I'll enjoy spending it in my own way.

COUNT. And you will spend nothing at all on women?

CAPTAIN. Not a penny. I will never give a woman the chance to come nibbling at it.

COUNT, *looking from door*. Here she is coming. Here is Mirandolina. Look at her! Isn't she adorable?

CAPTAIN. Oh, a great beauty! I would think a great deal more of a good greyhound.

MARQUIS. If you don't think much of her, I do.

CAPTAIN. I would leave her there if she was handsomer than Venus.

MIRANDOLINA *comes in*.

MIRANDOLINA, *curtsies*. Good morning to you, gentlemen. Do you want anything of me?

MARQUIS. I have something to ask of you but not now . . . by and by . . . but not here.

MIRANDOLINA. If you want anything from me, I will send a servant with it.

MARQUIS, *aside to* CAPTAIN. What do you think of that now?

CAPTAIN. What you call behavior I call impudence.

*The MARQUIS takes a silk handkerchief from his pocket, opens it and shows it to her.*

MIRANDOLINA. That's a pretty handkerchief, sir.

MARQUIS, *to MIRANDOLINA*. Ah! It's a fine one! I have good taste—aye?

MIRANDOLINA. It is certainly very tasty.

MARQUIS. It is from London.

MIRANDOLINA. Is it indeed?

MARQUIS, *folding up his handkerchief carefully*. It must be properly folded, that it may not be creased. A thing of this sort should be taken great care of.

*Gives it to MIRANDOLINA.*

Take it.

MIRANDOLINA. Do you want it sent to your room?

MARQUIS. No, to yours.

MIRANDOLINA. Why to mine?

MARQUIS. Because I am making you a present of it. A birthday present.

MIRANDOLINA. But I won't take it.

MARQUIS. Don't make me angry.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh! If it comes to that, you know, sir, I don't wish to disoblige anyone. So, just to keep you from losing your temper, I will take it.

COUNT. Dear Mirandolina, look at these earrings. Do you like them?

MIRANDOLINA. They are beautiful.

COUNT. Those are diamonds, do you know?

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, I know that. I know what diamonds are.

COUNT. And they are for you.

CAPTAIN, *aside to COUNT*. A fool and his money are soon parted!

MIRANDOLINA. Why are you giving them to me?

MARQUIS. A great present, indeed! In its own way the handkerchief is in better taste.

COUNT. Maybe so, but from way to way there is a good dis-



tance. These are set in the fashion. I want you to take them for my sake.

CAPTAIN. He has lost his wits!

MIRANDOLINA. No, indeed, sir.

COUNT. It is for your birthday. If you refuse you will vex me.

MIRANDOLINA. I don't know what to say. I would wish to be friendly with my guests. Not to vex the count, I *will* take them.

CAPTAIN. What a schemer!

COUNT, *to* CAPTAIN. Hasn't she a ready wit?

CAPTAIN. Very ready indeed. She will eat you up and never say thank you.

MARQUIS. Now, Mirandolina, I have a word to say to you. I am a nobleman.

MIRANDOLINA, *aside to* COUNT. What a fiery declaration! It won't burn him up altogether. If there is nothing else wanted, I will go.

CAPTAIN. Here, ma'am, I don't think much of the table linen you have given me.

*Angrily.*

If you have none better I will send out for some.

MIRANDOLINA. I will give you better, sir; it shall be sent up to you, but I think you might have asked it with a little more politeness.

CAPTAIN. Where I am spending my own money, there is no need of paying compliments.

COUNT, *to* MIRANDOLINA. You should pity him. He is a great enemy of all women.

CAPTAIN. What's that? I don't want to be pitied by her.

MIRANDOLINA. Poor women! What way have they treated him? Why are you so hard on us, sir?

CAPTAIN. That will do. There is no more to be said about it. Change the cloth for me, I will send my servant to fetch it.  
*Goes.*

MIRANDOLINA. That man is no better than a bear.

COUNT. Dear Mirandolina, if he knew you he would be at your feet.

MIRANDOLINA. I don't want him at my feet, but I don't like to be made little of.

COUNT. He is a woman hater. He can't bear the sight of them.

MIRANDOLINA. The poor foolish creature! He hasn't met yet with the woman who knows how to manage him—but he'll find her—he'll find her or maybe . . . maybe . . . he *has* found her! I hope she will punish him and put him down . . . and conquer him and get the better of him and teach him not to run down the best thing Mother Nature ever put a hand to!

COUNT. Don't waste another thought on him.

MIRANDOLINA. Indeed, I am so put out by his bad manners I will give him notice to leave the inn.

MARQUIS. Do so, and if he refuses to go, tell me and I will send him about his business. Make what use you will of my protection.

COUNT. And as to any money you may lose by it, you must allow me to make it up to you.

*Aside.*

Listen, send away the marquis along with him, and I promise I will make up for his loss.

MIRANDOLINA. Thank you, gentlemen, many thanks; but I am well able to tell a guest when I don't want him. And as to business, there is never an empty room in the house.

FABRIZIO, *coming in, to* COUNT. There is someone wanting you, sir.

COUNT. Do you know who it is?

FABRIZIO. I think he is a jeweler.

*Aside to* MIRANDOLINA.

Have sense, Mirandolina; this is no company for you.

*Goes.*

COUNT. Oh yes, he has an ornament to show me. I want it to go with these earrings, Mirandolina.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh no, sir.

COUNT. You deserve the best of everything, and I don't care a straw what it costs. I am going to take a look at it.

*Goes out.*

MARQUIS. That count is a nuisance with all his money!

MIRANDOLINA. Indeed, the count is giving himself too much trouble.

MARQUIS. There are some people who have no more than two-pence and will spend it for a show off! I know them; I know the ways of the world.

MIRANDOLINA. I know the ways of the world myself.

MARQUIS. They think a woman like you can be come round with presents!

MIRANDOLINA. Presents don't disagree with me at all.

MARQUIS. I would be afraid of offending you if I pressed things on you.

MIRANDOLINA. Indeed, sir, you have never offended me in that way.

MARQUIS. And I never will.

MIRANDOLINA. I believe that indeed.

MARQUIS. But if there is anything I can do for you, tell me of it.

MIRANDOLINA. But I should have to know first in what way you could help me.

MARQUIS. In every way.

MIRANDOLINA. But, tell me, for instance . . .

MARQUIS. By Jove, you are a wonder of a woman.

MIRANDOLINA. You are too kind, Your Excellency.

MARQUIS. Ah, I could almost commit a folly; I could almost curse my nobility.

MIRANDOLINA. Why is that, sir?

MARQUIS. There are times when I wish I could change places with the count.

MIRANDOLINA. I suppose because he is so rich?

MARQUIS. Rich! I don't care a pin for that! But if I were like him . . . a mere count . . .

MIRANDOLINA. What would you do then, sir?

MARQUIS. By all that's damnable . . . I would marry you!

*Goes out.*

MIRANDOLINA, *looking out of door after him.* Oh! What is it

he said? Your High Excellency the Marquis Misery would think of marrying me! But if you should wish to marry me, there is one little bar in the way . . . I myself would not wish it.

FABRIZIO, *enters*. Are you there, ma'am?

MIRANDOLINA. What is it?

FABRIZIO. That Captain Ripafratta in the middle room is crying out against the tablecloths; he says they are common and that he won't use them.

MIRANDOLINA. I know, I know; he told me about it and I'll change them.

FABRIZIO. All right. Come and put out whatever you have for him, and I'll carry them up.

MIRANDOLINA. Never mind . . . that will do . . . I will give them to him myself.

FABRIZIO. You will bring them to him yourself!

MIRANDOLINA. Just so, myself.

FABRIZIO. That is showing him great attention.

MIRANDOLINA. I pay attention to everything. Mind your own business.

FABRIZIO. It is quite plain to me, you will do nothing for me . . . you lead me on just to make a fool of me.

MIRANDOLINA. You are a goose, but you are a very honest servant.

FABRIZIO. It is always the custom that I should attend the lodgers.

MIRANDOLINA. You are a little too rough for them.

FABRIZIO. And you are maybe a little too smooth.

MIRANDOLINA. I know very well what I am doing. I want no advice.

FABRIZIO. All right. You may look for another servingman.

MIRANDOLINA. Why so, Mr. Fabrizio? Are you out with me?  
*Takes his hands.*

FABRIZIO. Do you remember what your father said to the two of us at the time of his death?

MIRANDOLINA. I do . . . and whenever I think of marrying I will bring it to mind.

FABRIZIO. But I am someway thin-skinned. There are some things I cannot put up with. Sometimes it seems as if you will have me, and other times that you will not have me. You say you are not giddy but you always take your own way.

MIRANDOLINA. But what sort of an owl do you take me for? A bit of vanity? A fool? I'm astonished at you. What are strangers to me, that are here today and gone tomorrow? If I treat them well it is for my own interest and the credit of the house. I live honestly and I like my freedom; I amuse myself with everybody but I fall in love with nobody. But I know who suits me and who is worth while. And when my time comes for marriage I will not forget my father. And whoever has served me well won't have to complain of me. I am not ungrateful. I know him, but he doesn't know me. That is enough, Fabrizio. You may understand me, if you can.

*Goes.*

FABRIZIO. Whoever can understand her is a very clever man. But, after all, if lodgers come, they go away again, and I am here always. The best chance will always be with me!

*Goes.*

## SCENE 2

CAPTAIN'S *Parlor*. CAPTAIN *sitting*. His SERVANT *comes in with a letter*.

SERVANT. If you please, sir, this letter has come for you.

CAPTAIN, *opening letter*. Who is writing to me? "The sincere friendship I have for you." It's another of these meddling friends of mine wants me to marry an heiress . . . £10,000. I can do without that while I am a bachelor. If I were married, that and as much again wouldn't be enough. I take a wife . . . I'd sooner take an ague. Bring in the chocolate.

SERVANT *goes out*.



MARQUIS, *coming in*. May I come in for a minute?

CAPTAIN. Certainly.

MARQUIS. You and I can have a sensible talk. That donkey of a count is not fit to join in with us at all. You know my way, I try to get on with everyone, but as to that man, I cannot stand him.

CAPTAIN. You can't stand him because he is your rival. For shame! A man of your rank in love with an innkeeper! A sensible man like you.

MARQUIS. My dear sir, she has bewitched me!

CAPTAIN. All folly! Weakness! What bewitchments? How is it that women don't bewitch me? Their bewitchings are in their humbug and flatteries. Anyone keeping out of their way as I do is in no danger of finding himself bewitched.

MARQUIS. I agree with you, and I don't agree . . . but what is worrying me more than that, just now, is that agent of mine in the country.

CAPTAIN. Has he robbed you?

MARQUIS. He has broken his word to me.

SERVANT *enters with chocolate*.

MARQUIS. Ha! What's this? Chocolate?

CAPTAIN, *to MARQUIS*. Perhaps you will take it?

MARQUIS, *takes and sips chocolate without ceremony, talking and drinking*. This agent of mine, as I was saying . . .

*Drinks.*

He promised to send me my money as usual . . .

*Sipping.*

but he has not sent it.

CAPTAIN. He'll send it another time.

MARQUIS. The fact is . . . the fact is

*Finishes chocolate.*

that I am in a great difficulty, and I don't know what to do.

CAPTAIN. Oh, a week more or less . . .

MARQUIS. But you, who are a man of position and breeding, know what a trying thing it is to have to break one's word. I am in a difficulty. Good God! What am I to do?

CAPTAIN. I am sorry to see you so much put out.

*Aside.*

If I could but escape with decency!

MARQUIS. You would not be able to oblige me? For a week . . . ?

CAPTAIN. My dear Marquis, if I could, you should make use of me with the greatest pleasure. I would have offered it to you at once if I had it. I am looking out for my own supplies, but they have not come in yet.

MARQUIS. Surely *you* are not short of money?

CAPTAIN. See here; this is all I have . . . it doesn't amount to much.

*Shows him a gold piece and some change.*

Yes, it is the last I have left.

MARQUIS. Lend it to me . . .

CAPTAIN. But what am I to do?

MARQUIS. I will pay you back.

CAPTAIN. I don't know what to say . . . well . . . take it.

*Gives coin.*

MARQUIS. I have to keep an appointment. I must be off. We shall meet again at dinner.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN, *to SERVANT*. Bravo! He was in hopes of borrowing ten guineas and contented himself with one in the end. Well, if he doesn't pay, it will keep him from bothering me. I think worse of his having drunk my chocolate!

MIRANDOLINA *comes to door with linen.*

MIRANDOLINA. May I come in, sir?

CAPTAIN, *harshly*. What do you want?

MIRANDOLINA, *coming a little further*. Here is some finer linen.

CAPTAIN, *pointing to table*. All right, leave it there.

MIRANDOLINA. Will you see, if you please, sir, if it is what you like?

CAPTAIN. What sort is it?

MIRANDOLINA. There are cambric sheets.

CAPTAIN. Sheets?

MIRANDOLINA. Yes, sir, the very finest; look at them.

CAPTAIN. I did not ask that. . . . I only asked for some better cloths than what you gave me.

MIRANDOLINA. I got this linen for those I should think worthy of it, who would know the difference. I give it to you because you are yourself . . . but I would give it to no other one.

CAPTAIN. "Because you are yourself." I don't know what you mean—

MIRANDOLINA. Look at this tablecloth . . . it is from Flanders.

CAPTAIN. It's a pity to use it at all.

MIRANDOLINA. I would not grudge so small a thing to a gentleman of your quality. I have napkins of the same; they are here for you.

CAPTAIN, *turns his back*. Give the things to my servant, or leave them there. You need not put yourself to so much trouble.

MIRANDOLINA, *making a grimace behind him, mimicking his manner*. Oh, it is no trouble at all, when it is for someone like you.

CAPTAIN. Well, well, that will do; I don't want anything more.

MIRANDOLINA. I will put it in the cupboard.

CAPTAIN. Wherever you like.

MIRANDOLINA, *having arranged linen*. What would you like, sir, for your dinner?

CAPTAIN. Whatever there is will do.

MIRANDOLINA. I would wish to know your tastes, sir. If there is any dish you have a liking for more than another, tell me of it.

CAPTAIN. If I want anything I will tell the waiter.

MIRANDOLINA. Men don't give the same attention to these things as we do. If there is any dish you have a fancy for, or any dressing, tell me what it is, if you please.

CAPTAIN. I am obliged to you. But even this civility will not help you to do with me what you have done with the marquis and the count.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, why should you talk of that folly? If people who come to an inn pretend to have fallen in love with

the landlady . . . we have something else to think of than to give heed to their nonsense. We try to serve our own interest. If they give us soft words, we turn it to the good of the business. As for myself, when I hear them beginning their flatteries I laugh myself tired.

CAPTAIN. Well done! I like to hear you speak the truth.

MIRANDOLINA. I always do. That is the only good thing about me.

CAPTAIN. For all that you are ready enough to make believe with your admirers.

MIRANDOLINA. I, to make believe! Heaven preserve me from any such thing! Go and ask those two gentlemen who are making love to me if I have ever given them any sign of liking at all, or if I have amused myself with them in any way that could deceive them. I don't drive them away, because it would not be to my interest to do that, but I sometimes come very near it. I hate the sight of men of that sort. Look here, I am not a young girl, I have left some years behind me; I'm no great beauty, but I have had good chances, but I never had a mind to marry, because I think it a fine thing to be free.

CAPTAIN. Yes, indeed; freedom is a treasure well worth having.

MIRANDOLINA. And there are many who are foolish enough to part with it.

CAPTAIN. I know what suits me best; liberty suits me.

MIRANDOLINA. Has Your Excellency a wife?

CAPTAIN. God forbid! I don't want one.

MIRANDOLINA. That's right, keep to that always; as to women . . . No, that's enough . . . I have no mind to speak ill of them.

CAPTAIN. You are the first woman I ever heard say that.

MIRANDOLINA. I tell you, we innkeepers see plenty and hear plenty, and I pity those men that are taken in by any woman at all.

CAPTAIN. That is an odd thing for you to say.

MIRANDOLINA. With your leave, sir.

*Is going.*

CAPTAIN. You are in a hurry.

MIRANDOLINA. I don't want to be troublesome.

CAPTAIN. Not at all; you amuse me.

MIRANDOLINA. You see now for yourself, sir, that is the way I go on with others . . . I keep them in chat for a few minutes. I joke a little to entertain them . . . and then all of a minute—you understand me, sir?—they begin to make love to me.

CAPTAIN. That happens because you have a taking manner.

MIRANDOLINA, *with a curtsy*. You are too kind, sir.

CAPTAIN. And then they lose their hearts.

MIRANDOLINA. What folly to be in such a hurry to lose their hearts!

CAPTAIN. It is a thing I never could understand.

MIRANDOLINA. Talk of strength, indeed! Fine strong men they are.

CAPTAIN. Their weakness is a disgrace to humanity—

MIRANDOLINA. That is right talk for a man. . . . I would like, sir, to shake you by the hand.

CAPTAIN. Why do you want to shake hands with me?

MIRANDOLINA. If you would condescend, sir. See . . . mine is clean.

CAPTAIN. Here is my hand.

MIRANDOLINA. This is the first time I ever had the honor to touch the hand of a man who had the real mind of a man. . . .

CAPTAIN. That will do.

MIRANDOLINA. Look now, if I had held out my hand to either one of that featherbrained pair downstairs, he would have been full sure I was dying for him. He would have lost his heart then and there! I would not have taken any such liberty with them for all the gold of the world. They have no understanding; oh, it's a blessing to be able to say things out without raising suspicion or doing mischief! I beg your pardon, sir, for my forwardness. Whenever I can serve you, just give the order, and I will pay more attention to it than I have ever done for anyone in the whole world.



CAPTAIN. Why should you think so well of me?

MIRANDOLINA. Because you being a well-reared gentleman, I know I can say out my mind to you and have no fear you will think I have an object, or that you will torment me with follies and absurdities.

CAPTAIN. Now, if you want to attend to your business, don't let me keep you here.

MIRANDOLINA. Yes, sir, I will go and look after the housework. That is my delight and my joy. In case you should want anything I will send the servingman.

CAPTAIN. All right. But you might look in at some other time.

MIRANDOLINA. I am not in the habit of attending on my guests . . . but it will be different with you.

CAPTAIN. Why so?

MIRANDOLINA. Because, sir, I like you.

CAPTAIN. You like me!

MIRANDOLINA. I like you because you are not weak, you are not a fool, you are a strong man, you will never give in to love!

*Goes.*

## ACT II

### SCENE:

*The CAPTAIN'S room, with a table laid for dinner. CAPTAIN is walking with a book. SERVANT standing near door. FABRIZIO brings in soup.*

FABRIZIO, *to* SERVANT. Tell your master the soup is on the table.

SERVANT. You can tell him as easy as myself.

FABRIZIO. He is so queer, I don't like to be speaking to him.

SERVANT. He is not altogether bad for all that. He can't bear the sight of a woman, but he is civil enough with men.

FABRIZIO. Your dinner is on the table, sir.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN *puts down book and comes to sit at table. The SERVANT stands behind his chair with a plate under his arm.*

CAPTAIN, *eating, to* SERVANT. It seems to me dinner is earlier than usual today.

SERVANT. This room was served before the others, sir; the Count of Albafiorita made a great noise when he was not served the first, but the mistress would not give in to putting you after him.

CAPTAIN. I am obliged to her for that.

SERVANT. She is a very perfect woman, sir. I never saw so civil a one in any part of the world I traveled.

CAPTAIN. You admire her then?

*Turning a little.*

SERVANT. If it was not for disobliging my master I would come and take service with Mirandolina.

CAPTAIN. You are a fool. What am I to do with you?

*Gives him plate and he changes it.*

SERVANT. Such a woman! I would obey her just the same as a little lapdog she would have.

*Goes for a dish.*

CAPTAIN. By Jovel She puts her enchantment on you all. It would be a very laughable thing if she should put it on me! I think tomorrow I'll go on to Livorno.

SERVANT, *bringing boiled fowl and another dish.* The mistress says if you do not like the pullet she will send you a pigeon.

CAPTAIN. I like everything so far. . . . What is this?

SERVANT. The mistress says I am to say to Your Excellency she hopes you will like this sauce she has made with her own hands.

CAPTAIN. She is doing a great deal for me.

*Takes it.*

It is excellent. It is a capital sauce . . . I have never tasted a better. If Mirandolina goes on like this she will never be in want of guests. A good table, a good laundry . . . and there's no denying she is pleasing . . . but what I think most of is her truthfulness; that is the great thing.

SERVANT. It is, sir.

CAPTAIN, *taking more sauce.* Tell her I am enjoying this sauce and much obliged to her.

SERVANT. I will, sir.

CAPTAIN. Go and tell her at once.

SERVANT. At once, sir.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN *goes on eating.*

SERVANT, *coming back.* She thanks Your Excellency for receiving her poor attempt so kindly. She is at this moment making ready another dish with her own hands, but I don't know what it is.

CAPTAIN. She is making it herself?

SERVANT. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. Give me something to drink.

SERVANT, *goes to sideboard, brings bottle.* Here it is, sir.

*Brings it to table.*

CAPTAIN. I must make a return for all this . . . it is too much. I must pay double . . . I will treat her well; but I'll go to Livorno.

*Servant gives him wine.*

The count has gone to dinner?

*Drinks.*

SERVANT. He went out, sir; he is not back yet.

MIRANDOLINA *comes to the door with a plate in her hand.*

MIRANDOLINA. May I come in?

CAPTAIN. Who is there?

SERVANT. Come in, ma'am; let me have it.

CAPTAIN. Take the dish from her.

MIRANDOLINA. No . . . let me have the pleasure of putting it on the table myself.

*Does so.*

CAPTAIN. You ought not to do that.

MIRANDOLINA. Ah, sir, who am I? Am I a lady? I am the servant of whoever comes into my inn.

CAPTAIN. What humility!

MIRANDOLINA. To tell the truth, it would be no trouble to me to attend all my guests at table, but I don't do it for certain reasons. I don't know if you understand me. But I have no scruple in coming to you, quite simply.

CAPTAIN. I am obliged to you. What dish is this?

MIRANDOLINA. It is a haricot made with my own hands.

CAPTAIN. Very good. If it is made by you it is sure to be good.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, you are too kind, sir; I don't know how to do anything right. But I would wish to give so good a gentleman something to his liking.

CAPTAIN, *aside to servant*. To Livorno tomorrow. . . . If you have anything to do now don't waste your time on me.

MIRANDOLINA. It doesn't matter, sir, the house is well provided with servants. I would be glad to know if this dish is to your taste.

CAPTAIN. Certainly. . . . I will try it.

*Tastes.*

Good! It couldn't be better. What a flavor! What is it?

MIRANDOLINA. I have secrets of my own, sir. This hand knows how to make good things.

CAPTAIN, *to SERVANT with some passion.* Give me some wine.

MIRANDOLINA. After this dish, sir, you ought to drink something good.

CAPTAIN, *to SERVANT.* Give me some Burgundy.

MIRANDOLINA. *Bravissimo!* Burgundy is a splendid wine. In my opinion it is the best of all at dinner.

SERVANT *puts down bottle and glass.*

CAPTAIN. You are a good judge of everything.

MIRANDOLINA. Sure enough, I don't often make a mistake.

CAPTAIN. But this time you are making a mistake.

MIRANDOLINA. In what way, sir?

CAPTAIN. In thinking I deserve to be made much of by you.

MIRANDOLINA, *sighing.* Ah! Sir.

CAPTAIN, *altered.* What is it? What do these sighs mean?

MIRANDOLINA. I will tell you. I show these little attentions to everybody, and I am sorry to think they displease you.

CAPTAIN, *quietly.* I will not be ungrateful to you.

MIRANDOLINA. I do not want to win gratitude from you . . .

I am doing no more than my duty.

CAPTAIN. No, no, I know that very well. I am not so bad as you think. You will not have to complain of me.

*Pours wine in his glass.*

MIRANDOLINA. But . . . sir . . . I don't understand.

CAPTAIN. Your good health!

*Drinks.*

MIRANDOLINA. I am greatly obliged . . . it is too much honor.

CAPTAIN. This wine is beyond praise.

MIRANDOLINA. Burgundy is my favorite.

CAPTAIN. Take some and welcome.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh! No, thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN. Have you had your dinner?



MIRANDOLINA. Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. Won't you try a little glass?

MIRANDOLINA. I don't deserve such a favor.

CAPTAIN. You are very welcome.

MIRANDOLINA. I don't know what to say . . . I am not worthy of your kindness.

CAPTAIN, *to SERVANT*. Bring a glass.

MIRANDOLINA. No, no; if you will allow me I will take this.

*Takes the CAPTAIN'S glass.*

CAPTAIN. Oh, but I have used that one.

MIRANDOLINA, *smiling*. I drink to your good looks, sir.

*The SERVANT puts another glass on the tray.*

CAPTAIN. Eh! By Jove!

*Pours out wine.*

MIRANDOLINA. But it is some time since I have eaten anything. I'm afraid it might go to my head.

CAPTAIN. There's no danger.

MIRANDOLINA. If you would favor me with a mouthful of bread.

CAPTAIN. Certainly.

*Gives her a piece.*

Take it.

MIRANDOLINA *with the glass in one hand and a piece of bread in the other, stands awkwardly as if not able to drink.*

CAPTAIN. You will be more comfortable if you sit down.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh! That is too much, sir.

CAPTAIN. Come, come; there is no one here.

*To SERVANT.*

Put a chair.

SERVANT, *aside*. The master must be near his death. I never saw him this way before.

*Goes for a chair.*

MIRANDOLINA. If the count should hear this . . . or the marquis . . . woe betide me.

CAPTAIN. Why so?

MIRANDOLINA. A hundred times they have pressed me to eat or drink something with them and I would not.

CAPTAIN. Come, sit down.

*She sits down and sips the wine.*

To SERVANT.

Listen . . .

*Speaking low.*

Don't mention to anyone that our landlady has been sitting at my table.

SERVANT. Never fear, sir.

MIRANDOLINA. May the captain have his heart's desire!

CAPTAIN. Thank you, my polite little landlady.

MIRANDOLINA. This toast has nothing to do with women.

CAPTAIN. No, and why?

MIRANDOLINA. Because I know you hate the sight of women.

CAPTAIN. That is true. I never wish to see one.

MIRANDOLINA. Is it so with you still?

CAPTAIN. I don't want . . .

*Looks at SERVANT.*

MIRANDOLINA. What don't you want?

CAPTAIN. Listen.

*Leans across table.*

I don't want you to make me change my nature.

MIRANDOLINA. I, sir? How could I do that?

CAPTAIN, to SERVANT. You may go and have a couple of eggs cooked for me and bring them up when they are ready.

SERVANT. What way should the eggs be done?

CAPTAIN. Whatever way you like, you fool!

SERVANT, *aside*. I understand, sir.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina, you are a very pretty young person.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, sir! You are making fun of me.

CAPTAIN. Listen . . . I am going to say a true word . . . a very true word that will be to your honor.

MIRANDOLINA. I shall be well pleased hearing it.

CAPTAIN. You are the first woman I have ever enjoyed talking to in this world.

MIRANDOLINA. I will tell you why, sir; not that I would make too much of myself, but people that have something akin know one another when they meet; this sympathy, this feeling for one another is sometimes to be found even between people who have never met. I myself feel for you what I have felt for no other.

CAPTAIN. I am afraid you want to take away my peace of mind.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, sir, you are a sensible man; you would never give in to the weaknesses others fall into. Indeed if I saw any sign of it I would never come in here again. I myself feel . . . as well as you . . . I don't know what . . . inside me . . . something I never felt before . . . but I will not give in to being foolish about a man . . . much less for one who is against us all . . . and he maybe . . . maybe, to try me, and then to laugh at me, has been talking in a way to lead me on . . . if you please, sir, give me another drop of Burgundy.

CAPTAIN. Eh? I know, I know . . .

*Pours out wine. Giving her the glass of wine.*

Take it.

MIRANDOLINA. Thank you, sir, but you yourself are not taking any.

CAPTAIN. Yes. I will take some.

*Aside.*

The one devil may drive out the other!

*Pours wine into his glass.*

And tell me, do you dislike men?

MIRANDOLINA. As you detest women.

CAPTAIN. My enemies are getting their revenge.

MIRANDOLINA. How is that, sir?

CAPTAIN. Ah, you little humbug, you know very well.

MARQUIS *heard calling, "Captain."*

*Drinks.*

MIRANDOLINA, *caressingly*. Captain!

CAPTAIN. What is it?

MIRANDOLINA. Touch it . . .

*Makes her glass touch his.*

To those who live in good fellowship!

CAPTAIN, *languidly*. In good fellowship.

MARQUIS *calls nearer*, "Captain."

MIRANDOLINA. With no ill thought!

CAPTAIN. I drink to that.

MARQUIS *comes in*.

MARQUIS. Here I am. Whose health are you drinking?

CAPTAIN, *changing manner*. What do you want to know?

MARQUIS. Excuse me, my dear sir. I had been calling out, and no one answered.

MIRANDOLINA. With your leave.

*Is going.*

CAPTAIN, *to MIRANDOLINA*. Don't go.

*To MARQUIS.*

I don't take such liberties with you.

MARQUIS. I beg pardon. I thought you were alone. I am delighted to see our admirable hostess here . . . ah! What do you say? Isn't she perfection?

MIRANDOLINA. I had brought up some things for the captain . . . a little faintness came over me and he came to my help with a glass of Burgundy.

MARQUIS, *to CAPTAIN*. Is that Burgundy?

CAPTAIN. Yes, it is Burgundy.

MARQUIS. Is it really?

CAPTAIN. At least I paid for it as such.

MARQUIS. I am a judge. Let me try it and I'll tell you if it is or not.

CAPTAIN, *calls at door*. Here!

SERVANT *enters*.

A glass for the marquis.

SERVANT *gives it and goes*.

MARQUIS. That glass is too small; Burgundy is not a liqueur; one can't judge without getting enough to judge by.

*Takes a larger glass.*

SERVANT, *comes in with plate.* Here are the eggs, sir.

*Puts them on the table.*

CAPTAIN. I don't want anything more.

MARQUIS. What have you there?

CAPTAIN. Eggs.

MARQUIS. I don't care about eggs.

SERVANT *takes them away to sideboard.*

MIRANDOLINA. Marquis, if the captain will allow me . . . will you taste this haricot . . . made with my own hands.

MARQUIS. Oh, very well, here . . . a chair . . .

SERVANT *hands him a chair and puts glass on tray.*

A fork . . .

CAPTAIN. Lay a place there.

SERVANT *does so.*

MIRANDOLINA. I am feeling better now, sir. . . . I will go.

*Gets up.*

MARQUIS. Do me the pleasure of stopping a little longer.

MIRANDOLINA. But I have my own business to attend to; and then, the captain . . .

MARQUIS, *to* CAPTAIN. You will allow her to stay a little longer.

CAPTAIN. Why do you want her to stay?

MARQUIS. I will ask you to taste a glass of Cyprus wine, the equal of which you have never tasted in this world, and I would wish Mirandolina to try it also and to give her opinion.

CAPTAIN, *to* MIRANDOLINA. You must stay to oblige the marquis.

MIRANDOLINA. The marquis will excuse me.

MARQUIS. Won't you just taste it?

MIRANDOLINA. Another time, Your Excellency.

CAPTAIN. Oh, you had better stay.

MIRANDOLINA, *to* CAPTAIN. Is that a command?

CAPTAIN. I say you are to stay here.

MIRANDOLINA, *sitting down.* I obey.



MARQUIS, *eating*. Oh, what a good dish! What a savory smell! What a flavor! Your health, Captain.

*Drinks Burgundy.*

CAPTAIN. Well, what do you think of it?

MARQUIS. With all due respect, it is very poor. Try my Cyprus wine. . . .

CAPTAIN. But where is this Cyprus wine?

MARQUIS. I have it here . . . I brought it with me. We must enjoy it together; there's no mistake about it.

*Takes from pocket a very small bottle.*

MIRANDOLINA. By what I see, sir, you don't want your wine to go to our heads.

MARQUIS. This! It should be tasted drop by drop like Tokay. Where are the glasses?

*Opens bottle; SERVANT brings glasses.*

Eh! Those are too big . . . have you no smaller?

*He covers the bottle with his hand.*

CAPTAIN, *to* SERVANT. Bring the liqueur glasses.

MIRANDOLINA. I think smelling it will be enough.

MARQUIS, *smelling it*. Oh dear! It has a very comforting smell.

*SERVANT brings three glasses on the tray, the MARQUIS very slowly fills the glasses, giving one to the CAPTAIN, one to MIRANDOLINA and keeping one, carefully recorking the bottle.*

What nectar!

*Takes a sip.*

What ambrosia! What distilled manna!

CAPTAIN, *aside to* MIRANDOLINA. What do you think of this filth?

MIRANDOLINA, *aside to* CAPTAIN. Bottle rinsings.

MARQUIS, *to* CAPTAIN. Eh! What do you think?

CAPTAIN. Very good! Delicious!

MARQUIS. Do you like it, Mirandolina?

MIRANDOLINA. Well, sir, as you ask me, I can't make a pretense. I think it nasty and I won't say it's nice. Let whoever

pleases pretend to like it, but I won't. To deceive in one thing is to be ready to deceive in other things.

CAPTAIN. You say that as a reproach to me and I don't know why.

MARQUIS. Mirandolina, you are no judge at all of wine of this sort; I am sorry for you. You were able to understand the handkerchief I gave you, and to admire it—

*Rises.*

—but you know nothing at all about Cyprus wine.

*Finishes his glass.*

May I call your servant?

*Goes to door and talks to SERVANT.*

MIRANDOLINA, *moves nearer to* CAPTAIN. It is amusing to hear him praise his own goods.

CAPTAIN, *aside to* MIRANDOLINA. That is not my habit.

MIRANDOLINA, *aside to* CAPTAIN. Your boasting is of your contempt for us poor women.

CAPTAIN, *aside to* MIRANDOLINA. And yours in bringing to your feet every man.

MIRANDOLINA, *carelessly*. Not all men.

CAPTAIN, *with some passion*. Yes, all.

MARQUIS, *returning from door*. Here is a clean glass.

SERVANT *brings them on a tray*.

MIRANDOLINA. I don't want any more.

MARQUIS. No, never fear, it's not for you. . . . Here, my man, with your master's leave, go to the Count of Albafiorita and tell him out *loud*, so that anyone may hear, that I beg him to try a little of this.

SERVANT. I will, sir.

CAPTAIN. Marquis, you are very generous.

MIRANDOLINA. Take care it doesn't upset him, sir.

MARQUIS, *to* MIRANDOLINA. Do you know what it is upsets me?

MIRANDOLINA. What is it?

MARQUIS. Your beautiful eyes.

MIRANDOLINA. Is that so, indeed?

MARQUIS. Captain, I have entirely lost my heart to her. And I am as jealous as a bear. I don't mind her being here, because I know what you are, but otherwise I wouldn't let her near you for a hundred thousand pounds.

*Exit.*

CAPTAIN. The poor marquis is going crazy.

MIRANDOLINA. He has taken away his little bottle to comfort him.

CAPTAIN. He is mad, I tell you, and it is you who have driven him mad.

MIRANDOLINA. Am I one of those who make men mad?

CAPTAIN, *troubled*. Yes, you are.

MIRANDOLINA, *getting up*. Sir . . . with your leave . . .

CAPTAIN. Stay here.

MIRANDOLINA, *going*. I beg pardon, I don't trouble the wits of anyone.

*Goes toward door.*

CAPTAIN. Listen to me . . .

*He gets up but stands before her.*

MIRANDOLINA, *tries to brush past him*. Excuse me.

CAPTAIN, *imperiously*. Stay here, I tell you.

MIRANDOLINA, *turning, with pride*. What do you want with me?

CAPTAIN. Nothing . . .

*Is confused.*

Take another glass of Burgundy.

MIRANDOLINA. Well, be quick, for I am going.

CAPTAIN. Sit down.

MIRANDOLINA. Standing, standing!

CAPTAIN, *giving her the glass gently*. Take it.

MIRANDOLINA. I will give a toast, and then I will be off . . .  
a toast my nurse taught me:

Wine comes in at the mouth,  
And Love comes in at the eye,  
That's all we shall know for truth,

Before we grow old and die;  
I lift the glass to my mouth  
I look at you and I sigh.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN. Well done . . . Come back! Ah, the wretch, she has made off . . . and she has left a hundred devils to torment me! "I lift the glass to my mouth, I look at you and I sigh." What does that mean? Ah! You little villain. I know what you are at! You want to put me down, to get the better of me. But you do it so charmingly; you know so well how to wind yourself in. The devil, the devil, you can do as you like with me. No, I will go away. I will never see her again. Let her not come in my way again; my curse upon women! I never will set foot again in any place where there is one to be found.

SERVANT, *coming in*. Shall I put the fruit on the table, sir?

CAPTAIN. Go to the devil!

SERVANT. Are you speaking to me, sir?

CAPTAIN. I'll leave this tomorrow.

SERVANT. Very well, sir.

CAPTAIN. Yes, or tonight.

SERVANT. It will be hard to be ready, sir.

CAPTAIN. I will not stay here another night. I am determined. I have made up my mind like a man. Go to Fabrizio and tell him to bring my bill.

SERVANT. I will do that, sir.

CAPTAIN. Listen—have the luggage ready within two hours. What's the matter? Do you hear me . . . ?

SERVANT. Oh, sir, my heart is broken going away, on account of Mirandolina!

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN, *walking to door and returning as if undecided*. For all that, I feel a sort of unwillingness to leave that is quite new to me. So much the worse for me if I should stay; Mirandolina might get hold of me. I ought to set out. I am determined to get away this very minute.

FABRIZIO *coming in, meets him at door*.

FABRIZIO. Is it true, sir, that you are wanting your bill?

CAPTAIN. Yes, have you brought it?

FABRIZIO. The mistress is just making it out.

CAPTAIN. She makes up the accounts?

FABRIZIO. She does always. She did it living with her father. She can write and can make up figures better than any young fellow in business.

CAPTAIN. She is a wonderful woman.

FABRIZIO. And will you be going so soon from us?

CAPTAIN. Yes, I've business to attend to.

FABRIZIO. I hope you will remember the waiter.

CAPTAIN. Bring the bill and I'll know what I should do.

FABRIZIO. Is it here you want the bill brought? I'll bring it without any delay.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN. You are all bewitched by Mirandolina! It is no wonder if even I myself catch fire . . . but I'll make my escape! I will go away. Who do I see? Mirandolina? What does she want with me? She has a sheet of paper in her hand. She is bringing the bill. What can I do! I must put up with this last attack. In two hours from this I set out.

MIRANDOLINA, *coming in with bill. Sadly.* Sir . . .

CAPTAIN. What is it, Mirandolina?

MIRANDOLINA, *standing in background.* I beg your pardon.

CAPTAIN. Come over here.

MIRANDOLINA, *sadly.* You asked for your bill. I have brought it.

CAPTAIN. Give it here.

MIRANDOLINA. Here it is.

*Wipes her eyes with her apron as she is giving it.*

CAPTAIN. What is the matter? You are crying.

MIRANDOLINA. Nothing, sir. The smoke has got into my eyes.

CAPTAIN. The smoke got into your eyes? Ah, that will do. What does the bill matter.

*Reads it.*



Two guineas in four days! Such a liberal table . . . only two guineas!

MIRANDOLINA. That is your account, sir.

CAPTAIN. And those two special dishes you gave me this morning? They are not put down.

MIRANDOLINA. I beg your pardon, sir. What I give I do not charge for.

CAPTAIN. You've been feasting me for nothing.

MIRANDOLINA. Forgive the liberty. I thank you for an act of kindness.

*Covers her face appearing to cry.*

CAPTAIN. But what is the matter?

MIRANDOLINA. I don't know if it's the smoke or if it's some weakness of the eyes.

CAPTAIN. I would not like you to suffer through cooking those two priceless dishes for me.

MIRANDOLINA. If it was for that, I would suffer very willingly.

*She falls as if unconscious into a chair.*

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina! Oh, my dear Mirandolina! She has fainted. Have you fallen in love with me? But so quickly . . . And why not? Am I not in love with you? Dear Mirandolina! I, saying "dear" to a woman! But it is for my sake you have fainted. Oh, how beautiful you are! If I had but something to bring you round . . . ! I, not being used to weak women, have no salts or scent bottles. Who is there? Nobody. Quick, I will go. Bless you, my poor little thing.

*He goes.*

MIRANDOLINA, *sitting up*. I've got him this time! I thought a faint would do it. Back to it now.

*Falls as before.*

CAPTAIN, *coming back with a glass of water*. Here I am! Here I am. She has not come to herself yet. Ah! There can be no doubt she likes me. I will sprinkle the water on her face. She ought to awake.

*He sprinkles and she moves.*

Courage, courage . . . I am here, my dear. I will not go away now or ever.

SERVANT, *with sword and belt*. Here are the sword and the belt.

CAPTAIN, *to SERVANT*. Go away.

SERVANT. The portmanteaus.

CAPTAIN. Get away; confound you!

SERVANT. Mirandolina!

*Comes toward her.*

CAPTAIN, *seizing sword*. Go or I'll split your head!

SERVANT *goes*.

Not come round yet? Her forehead is moist. Come, dear Mirandolina, take courage. Open your eyes. . . . Tell me everything.

MARQUIS *and* COUNT *come in*.

MARQUIS. Captain!

COUNT. What on earth!

CAPTAIN. Oh, confound it.

MARQUIS, *excitedly*. Mirandolina!

MIRANDOLINA, *getting up*. Ah, dear me.

MARQUIS. It was my voice that brought her round.

COUNT. I am glad, Captain . . .

MARQUIS. Well done. Sir . . . after all your talk!

CAPTAIN. That's impertinence.

COUNT. Have you given in at last?

CAPTAIN. Go to the devil, the two of you!

*He throws jug at them and goes toward them in a fury.*

COUNT. He has gone mad!

*They rush out, followed by* CAPTAIN.

MIRANDOLINA, *getting up*. I've done it! His heart is on fire, in flames, in cinders. I have but to carry through my victory to teach a lesson to all unmannerly men!

## ACT III

### SCENE 1

*Room with three doors, as in Act I, with a table, and linen to be ironed. MIRANDOLINA alone.*

MIRANDOLINA. Eh, Fabrizio!

FABRIZIO, *coming in*. Ma'am?

MIRANDOLINA. Do something for me; bring me the hot iron.

FABRIZIO, *gravely, as he is going*. Yes, ma'am.

MIRANDOLINA. You must excuse me for giving you this trouble.

FABRIZIO. Not at all, ma'am. So long as I am eating your bread it is my duty to obey you.

*Is going.*

MIRANDOLINA. Stop, listen; you are not bound to obey me in these things . . . but I know you do it willingly for me, and I . . . that's enough, I'll say no more.

FABRIZIO. As for me, I would do the world and all for you . . . but I see all I can do is but thrown away.

MIRANDOLINA. How is it thrown away? Am I so ungrateful?

FABRIZIO. You have no respect for poor men . . . you are too much taken up with the quality.

MIRANDOLINA. Ah, you poor goosel! If I could but tell you all . . . ! Come, come . . . go and get me the iron.

FABRIZIO. But what I have seen with my own eyes . . .

MIRANDOLINA. Come along . . . not so much chattering; get the iron.

FABRIZIO, *going*. All right, all right. I will do your bidding but not for long.

MIRANDOLINA, *pretending to speak to herself, but meaning to*

*be heard.* With these men, the more one wants to please them, the less one succeeds.

FABRIZIO, *with tenderness, turning round.* What did you say?

MIRANDOLINA. Go away; bring me that smoothing iron.

FABRIZIO. I'll bring it. I don't understand you at all; one time you are for putting me up; another time for knocking me down. I don't understand it at all.

*Goes.*

MIRANDOLINA. You poor silly! You have to obey me in spite of yourself.

SERVANT, *coming in.* Mistress Mirandolina . . .

MIRANDOLINA. What is it, friend?

SERVANT. My master sends his compliments . . . and to know how you are.

MIRANDOLINA. Tell him I am very well.

SERVANT, *giving her a smelling bottle.* He says that if you will smell these salts, they will be very serviceable to you.

MIRANDOLINA. This bottle seems to be made of gold.

SERVANT. It is, ma'am, of gold; I can answer for that.

MIRANDOLINA. Why didn't he give me his smelling salts when I was in that terrible faint?

SERVANT. He had not the little bottle at that time.

MIRANDOLINA. And where did he get it now?

SERVANT. Listen, and I will tell you a secret: he sent me just now to bring a goldsmith and he bought it, and he paid seven guineas for it . . . and after that he sent me to an apothecary for the salts.

MIRANDOLINA. Ah! Ah! Ah!

SERVANT. Are you laughing?

MIRANDOLINA. I am laughing because he is so ready to cure me now the faint is over.

SERVANT. It will be good for another time.

MIRANDOLINA. Well, I'll smell it as a safeguard.

*She smells it and gives him back the bottle.*

Take it and say I am obliged to him.

SERVANT. Oh, the bottle is your own.

MIRANDOLINA. How is it mine?

SERVANT. The master bought it on purpose.

MIRANDOLINA. On purpose for me?

SERVANT. For you; but hush, be quiet.

MIRANDOLINA. Take him back his bottle and say I am obliged to him.

SERVANT. Ah, that won't do.

MIRANDOLINA. Give it to him, I tell you . . . I don't want it.

SERVANT. Would you wish to offend him?

MIRANDOLINA. Not so much talk. Do as I bid you; take it.

SERVANT. I suppose I must. I will bring it to him. Oh, what a woman! To refuse pure gold! I never met your equal, ma'am. And I should travel far to find it!

*Goes.*

MIRANDOLINA. He is boiled, baked, and roasted!

FABRIZIO, *comes in stiffly, with an iron in his hand.* Here is the smoothing iron.

MIRANDOLINA. Is it very hot?

FABRIZIO. It is, ma'am. It is so hot it might have scorched me.

MIRANDOLINA. Is there any new grievance?

FABRIZIO. This gentleman of a captain has sent you messages and has sent you presents by his servant.

MIRANDOLINA. Yes, Mr. High-and-Mighty . . . he sent me a little smelling bottle and I sent it back to him.

FABRIZIO. You sent it back to him?

MIRANDOLINA. I did . . . you can ask the same servant.

FABRIZIO. Why, now, did you do that?

MIRANDOLINA. Because, Fabrizio . . . I can't tell you. . . .  
Let us talk of some other thing.

FABRIZIO. My dear Mirandolina, you should have pity on me.

MIRANDOLINA. Go away. . . . Have done. Let me do my ironing.

FABRIZIO. I'm not stopping you from doing it.

MIRANDOLINA. Go and heat another iron, and, when it's hot, bring it to me.



FABRIZIO. I will. Believe now what I am saying . . .

MIRANDOLINA. Don't say another word; I am getting vexed.

FABRIZIO. I'll say nothing. You have a flighty little head, but I like you all the same.

*Goes.*

MIRANDOLINA. That is all right. I'm getting credit with Fabrizio for having refused the captain's gift. That shows I know how to live and what to do.

CAPTAIN, *coming in at back*. There she is. I didn't want to come . . . it's the devil that has dragged me.

MIRANDOLINA, *seeing him with the corner of her eye, and ironing*. There he is, there he is.

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina?

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. Oh, sir! I beg your pardon.

CAPTAIN. How are you?

MIRANDOLINA, *stepping back without looking at him*. Very well, thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN. I have reason to complain of you.

MIRANDOLINA, *looking at him a moment*. Why so, sir?

CAPTAIN. Because you have refused the smelling bottle I sent you.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. What would you have me do?

CAPTAIN. I would have you accept what was offered to you.

MIRANDOLINA. Thank Heaven I am not subject to fainting fits.

*Ironing.*

What happened to me today is a thing that will never happen to me again.

CAPTAIN. Dear Mirandolina, I hope I was not the cause of it.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. But I am afraid it is you yourself who were the cause of it.

CAPTAIN, *with passion*. I? Is that so?

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing with fury*. You made me drink that unlucky wine and it upset me.

CAPTAIN, *mortified*. What! Is it possible?

MIRANDOLINA. It was that and no other thing. I will never go near your parlor again.

CAPTAIN, *tenderly*. I understand; you will not come near me; I understand the mystery. Yes, I understand it. But come, my dear, and you will not regret it.

MIRANDOLINA. This iron is getting cold. Here, Fabrizio!

*Calls very loud from the door.*

If the other iron is heated, bring it in.

CAPTAIN. Do me this kindness now. Take this bottle.

*Holds it out.*

MIRANDOLINA, *with displeasure . . . ironing*. Indeed, sir, I don't accept presents.

CAPTAIN. But you took one from the count.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. I was forced to take it, not to offend him.

CAPTAIN. And you would offend and disoblige me?

MIRANDOLINA. What does it matter to you if a woman offends you? You can't dislike them more than you do.

CAPTAIN. Ah! Mirandolina, I cannot say that now.

MIRANDOLINA. Tell me, sir, when will there be a new moon?

CAPTAIN. It is not the moon that has worked the change; it is your own beauty and your own charm.

MIRANDOLINA, *laughing out and ironing*. Ha! Ha! Ha!

CAPTAIN. You are laughing?

MIRANDOLINA. You don't want me to laugh? You make fun of me and then you don't want me to laugh!

CAPTAIN. That's all nonsense; here, take it.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. No, thank you; no, thank you.

CAPTAIN. Take it . . . or you'll make me angry.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing with exaggeration*. Fabrizio! The iron!

CAPTAIN, *angrily*. Will you take it, or will you not take it?

MIRANDOLINA. Oh! Fie! Temper, temper!

*Takes bottle and throws it contemptuously into linen basket.*

*Loud as before.*

Fabrizio!

FABRIZIO, *comes in with the iron*. Here I am.

*Seeing the CAPTAIN, he grows jealous.*

MIRANDOLINA, *taking the iron*. Is it very hot?

FABRIZIO, *dignified*. It is, ma'am.

MIRANDOLINA, *tenderly to FABRIZIO*. What is the matter with you? You seem to be put out?

FABRIZIO. Nothing, ma'am; nothing at all.

MIRANDOLINA, *as before*. Are you not well?

FABRIZIO. Give me the other iron if you want it brought to the fire.

MIRANDOLINA, *as before*. Indeed I am afraid there is something wrong with you.

CAPTAIN. Give him the iron and let him go.

MIRANDOLINA, *to CAPTAIN*. I think a great deal of him, as you know. He is my good helper.

CAPTAIN, *aside, furious*. I can stand no more of this.

MIRANDOLINA, *giving the iron to FABRIZIO*. Take it, my dear, and heat it.

FABRIZIO, *tenderly*. Ah! Ma'am.

MIRANDOLINA, *driving him away*. Get along, hurry.

FABRIZIO. What a life this is; I can stand no more of it.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN. Great civility to your own servant.

MIRANDOLINA. Well, what have you to say about it?

CAPTAIN. I say you are in love with him.

MIRANDOLINA. In love with a servingman! You are paying me a fine compliment, sir. . . . I have not such bad taste as you think. When I want to fall in love I won't throw myself away foolishly.

CAPTAIN. You are worthy of a king's love.

MIRANDOLINA. The King of Spades or the King of Hearts?

CAPTAIN. Let us leave joking, Mirandolina, and talk sense.

MIRANDOLINA, *ironing*. Talk on then and I'll listen.

CAPTAIN. Can't you leave off your ironing for a few minutes?

MIRANDOLINA. Oh no, I must get ready this linen for to-morrow.

CAPTAIN. You think more of it than of me?

MIRANDOLINA. To be sure I do.

CAPTAIN. Can you say that?

MIRANDOLINA. Certainly. This linen is useful to me, and I see no use at all I can put you to.

CAPTAIN. On the contrary, you can do what you like with me.

MIRANDOLINA. Eh? You woman hater?

CAPTAIN. Don't torment me any more . . . you have had your full revenge. . . . I think well of you; I would think well of any woman like you if she were to be found . . . I admire you, I love you, and I ask your pity.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh yes, sir, I understand.

*She lets a sleeve drop.*

CAPTAIN. You may believe me.

*Picks up sleeve and gives it to her.*

MIRANDOLINA. Don't take that trouble.

CAPTAIN. You are well worth waiting on.

MIRANDOLINA. Ha! Ha! Ha!

CAPTAIN. Why are you laughing?

MIRANDOLINA. Because you are talking nonsense.

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina, I can bear no more.

MIRANDOLINA. Are you feeling ill?

CAPTAIN. Yes, I can't stand it.

MIRANDOLINA, *throwing him the bottle, with contempt.* Take a sniff of your own salts!

CAPTAIN. Don't treat me so harshly.

*Tries to take her hand but she touches him with the iron.*

Damn!

MIRANDOLINA. I beg your pardon. I didn't do it on purpose.

CAPTAIN. Never mind . . . this is nothing. You have given me a worse wound than that.

MIRANDOLINA. Where, sir?

CAPTAIN. In the heart.

MIRANDOLINA, *calls laughingly.* Fabrizio!

CAPTAIN. For pity sake, don't call that man.

MIRANDOLINA. But I want the other iron.

CAPTAIN. Wait and I will call my servant.

MIRANDOLINA. Eh! Fabrizio!

CAPTAIN. I swear to Heaven if that man comes in, I will break his head.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, that's a good joke! I am not to be attended by my own servant!

CAPTAIN. Call someone else. . . . I won't have that fellow come here.

MIRANDOLINA. It seems to me, sir, you are going a little too far.

*She draws back from table with the iron in her hand.*

CAPTAIN. Oh, forgive me! I am outside myself.

MIRANDOLINA. I had better go into the kitchen.

CAPTAIN. No, my dear, stay here.

MIRANDOLINA, *moving on round table*. This is a strange thing to happen.

CAPTAIN, *following her*. Take pity on me.

MIRANDOLINA, *passing back*. I am not to call who I like?

CAPTAIN. I tell you I am jealous of that man. This is the first time I have known what love is.

MIRANDOLINA, *still walking*. No one has ever given me orders.

CAPTAIN, *following her*. I don't want to give you orders.

MIRANDOLINA, *turning, with a change of manner*. What do you want of me?

CAPTAIN. Love, compassion, pity.

MIRANDOLINA. A man that could not put up with me this very morning to be calling out for love and pity! It is all nonsense. I am not giving heed to you. I don't believe a word of it.

*Goes.*

CAPTAIN, *alone*. My curse upon the hour I first looked at her! There is no help for me now, I have tumbled into the net!

*Goes.*

COUNT, *coming in*. What do you say, Marquis, to the great news?

MARQUIS. To what news?



COUNT, *to* MARQUIS. That unmannerly captain, that woman hater, has fallen in love with Mirandolina!

MARQUIS. Likely enough. He saw that anyone I cast my eye upon must be worth admiring. But he will be well punished for his impudence.

COUNT. But if Mirandolina encourages him?

MARQUIS. That cannot happen. She would not think it right toward me. She knows who I am. She knows all I have done for her.

COUNT. I have done a great deal more for her. But it is all thrown away. Mirandolina is making up to Captain Ripafratta. She has shown him attention she has never shown to either of us. That's the way with women, the more you do for them, the less thanks you get, and they run off after somebody who has never thrown them a civil word.

MARQUIS. If it were true . . . but it cannot be.

COUNT. Why can it not be true?

MARQUIS. Would she put that man on a level with me?

COUNT. Didn't you see her yourself sitting at his table? Did she ever do as much as that for us? The best linen for him, his table served the first. Dishes made for him with her own hands; the servants all notice it and talk about it. Fabrizio is raging with jealousy. And that fainting fit, whether it was real or a pretense, what was that but a declaration of love?

MARQUIS. What! She herself made that delicious ragout for him and gave me a dish of leathery beef and potatoes? This is a great insult, indeed.

COUNT. I, who spent so much on her!

MARQUIS. And I, who was always giving her presents! Why, I gave her a glass of my Cyprus wine!

COUNT. I see she is a thankless creature. I have made up my mind to give her up. I will leave this wretched inn this very day.

MARQUIS. Yes, you will do well to go away.

COUNT. And you had better do the same.

MARQUIS. But . . . where can we go?

COUNT. Leave that to me.

MARQUIS. All right. I'll punish this fool of a woman. I will give up her inn!

*Both go out.*

SCENE 2

*The same room. MIRANDOLINA rushes in by center door—bangs and locks it.*

MIRANDOLINA, *panting*. What an escape!

CAPTAIN *heard rushing to door and knocking at it.*

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina! Let me in, Mirandolina.

MIRANDOLINA. What do you want, sir?

CAPTAIN. Open the door!

MIRANDOLINA. Wait a while. . . . I will be with you directly.

CAPTAIN. Why can't you let me in?

MIRANDOLINA. There are people coming. Go, if you please.

I am coming at once.

CAPTAIN. I am going. If you don't come, it will be the worse for you.

*Goes.*

MIRANDOLINA, *looking through keyhole*. Yes, yes, he is gone.

*Goes to another door.*

Here, Fabrizio!

FABRIZIO, *coming in*. Did you call?

MIRANDOLINA. Come here; I want to tell you something.

FABRIZIO. I'm here.

MIRANDOLINA. Do you know that the captain has fallen in love with me?

FABRIZIO. Oh, I know that.

MIRANDOLINA. What! You know it? But I myself didn't know it.

FABRIZIO. You poor innocent! You never knew it. You did not take notice, the time you were handling your smoothing

irons, of the eyes he was throwing on you and the jealousy he was showing toward myself.

MIRANDOLINA. I was thinking of my work. I didn't think much of what he was doing.

*Goes to door and listens.*

But since then, Fabrizio, he has said things to me that make me blush.

FABRIZIO. Look here, now. That is because you are young, and you are alone without father or mother or anybody at all. If you had a husband things would not turn out that way.

MIRANDOLINA. Well, it may be you are saying what is true. I have been thinking of marrying.

FABRIZIO. Remember what your father said to you.

MIRANDOLINA. Yes, I remember.

*CAPTAIN heard again beating at door.*

MIRANDOLINA, *to* FABRIZIO. Listen . . . Listen!

FABRIZIO, *loud, toward door*. Who is that knocking?

CAPTAIN. Open the door!

MIRANDOLINA, *to* FABRIZIO. Don't let him in!

FABRIZIO, *goes nearer to door*. What do you want?

MIRANDOLINA. Wait till I go away.

FABRIZIO. What are you afraid of?

MIRANDOLINA. Dear Fabrizio, I don't know . . . I am afraid. . . .

FABRIZIO. Don't be uneasy. . . . I'll take care of you.

CAPTAIN. Let me in, I say!

*MIRANDOLINA goes.*

FABRIZIO. What do you want, sir? What is this noise? That is no behavior for a respectable inn.

CAPTAIN. Open the door.

*He is heard trying to force it.*

FABRIZIO. The devil! I am in no hurry to open it. Are any of the men about? There's nobody!

*MARQUIS and COUNT come in at third door.*

COUNT. What is it?

MARQUIS. What is this noise?

FABRIZIO, *low that the CAPTAIN may not hear*. I beg your pardon, gentlemen. This captain that wants to get in . . .

CAPTAIN. Open the door, or I'll break it open!

MARQUIS, *to COUNT*. Is he mad? Let us go away.

COUNT, *to FABRIZIO*. Open it; I have something to say to him.

FABRIZIO. I will open it, but I ask of you—

COUNT. Don't be afraid. You have us here.

*FABRIZIO opens door and the CAPTAIN comes in.*

CAPTAIN. The devil! Where is she?

FABRIZIO. Who are you looking for, sir?

CAPTAIN. Mirandolina. Where is she?

FABRIZIO. I don't know.

CAPTAIN. The good-for-nothing baggage! I'll find her!

*Comes farther into the room and sees COUNT and MARQUIS.*

COUNT, *to CAPTAIN*. What has gone wrong with you?

FABRIZIO. What do you want with the mistress, sir?

CAPTAIN. That is no business of yours. When I give orders I expect to be obeyed. That is what I pay for.

FABRIZIO. You pay your money to be served in straight things and honest things.

CAPTAIN. What are you saying? What do you know about it? Get out of that, you rascal, or I'll knock you down.

FABRIZIO. I wonder at you.

MARQUIS, *to FABRIZIO*. Be quiet.

COUNT, *to FABRIZIO*. Leave the room.

CAPTAIN, *to FABRIZIO*. Get away out of this.

FABRIZIO, *getting warm*. I tell you, gentlemen . . .

MARQUIS. Be off!

CAPTAIN. Making me wait in my room!

*They all push him away—he goes.*

MARQUIS. What the deuce ails you?

CAPTAIN. She has been talking with Fabrizio. Was she talking of marrying him?

COUNT. Well, your heart is very easy to touch, after all.

CAPTAIN. What do you mean by saying that?

COUNT. I know why you're angry.

CAPTAIN, *to* MARQUIS. Do you know what he is talking about?

MARQUIS. I don't know anything.

COUNT. I am talking about you. Under pretense of despising women you tried to come between me and Mirandolina.

CAPTAIN, *confused*, *to* MARQUIS. I?

COUNT. Look at me and answer me. Perhaps you are ashamed of your behavior.

CAPTAIN. I should be ashamed to listen to you any longer without saying that you are telling a lie.

COUNT. I, telling a lie?

MARQUIS. Things are getting worse.

CAPTAIN, *to* MARQUIS, *angrily*. The count doesn't know what he is talking about.

MARQUIS. I don't want to mix myself with it at all.

COUNT, *to* CAPTAIN. You yourself are a liar.

MARQUIS. I'm going away.

*Tries to go.*

CAPTAIN, *holding him by force*. Stop here.

COUNT. And you will account to me.

CAPTAIN. Yes, I will account to you. . . .

*To* MARQUIS.

Lend me your sword.

MARQUIS. Come now, quiet yourselves, both of you. My dear Count, what does it matter to you if the captain is in love with Mirandolina.

CAPTAIN. I, in love? That's not true . . . whoever says that is a liar.

MARQUIS. I, a liar? That does not refer to me . . . it was not I who said it.

CAPTAIN. Who says it, then?

COUNT. I say it, and hold to it, and I will not be put down by you.

CAPTAIN, *to* MARQUIS. Give me your sword.



MARQUIS. I will not, I say.

CAPTAIN. Are you another enemy?

MARQUIS. I am everybody's friend.

CAPTAIN. Damn!

*Takes sword from MARQUIS, who gives it with scabbard.  
To MARQUIS.*

If you take offense I will settle with you as well.

MARQUIS. Go away! You are too hot-tempered and  
*Grumbles to himself.*

I don't like it.

COUNT. I want satisfaction.

*Puts himself on guard.*

CAPTAIN. I will let you have it!

*Tries to take sword out of scabbard but can't.*

MARQUIS. That sword does not know you!

CAPTAIN, *trying to force it out.* Confound it!

MARQUIS. Captain, you will never do it.

COUNT. I am out of patience.

CAPTAIN. Here it is!

*Draws sword, but sees it has no blade.*

What is this?

MARQUIS. You have broken my sword.

CAPTAIN. Where is the rest of it? There is nothing in the scabbard.

MARQUIS. Yes, that is true. . . . I broke it in my last duel.  
I had forgotten.

COUNT. I swear to Heaven you shall not escape me.

CAPTAIN. Who wants to escape? I am not afraid to stand up to you with nothing but this inch of blade.

MARQUIS. It is a Spanish blade. . . . It does not know fear.

CAPTAIN. Yes, with this blade.

*Goes toward COUNT.*

COUNT, *putting himself at defense.* Back!

MIRANDOLINA and FABRIZIO come in.

FABRIZIO. Stop, stop, gentlemen!

MIRANDOLINA. Stop, stop, sir!

COUNT. It is all your fault!

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, poor me!

MARQUIS. It is on your account.

COUNT, *pointing at the* CAPTAIN. He has fallen in love with you.

CAPTAIN. That's a lie.

MIRANDOLINA. The captain in love with me! He denies it, and his denying it mortifies me and makes little of me and makes me understand his politeness and my own weakness. . . . To tell the truth, if I had made him care for me I should have taken credit for the greatest victory in the world; a man who can't bear the sight of a woman, who despises them, and makes nothing of them—how could we ever expect to see such a one fall in love? Gentlemen, I am very straight and truthful; when I ought to speak I speak out, and I cannot hide the truth. I wanted to punish the captain for his scorn of us all. I tried to touch his heart, but I failed to do it.

*To* CAPTAIN.

Is not this true, sir? I tried and tried and didn't succeed after all.

CAPTAIN. What can I say . . . ? I can't say anything.

COUNT, *to* MIRANDOLINA. What do you think of him now?

MARQUIS, *to* MIRANDOLINA. He has not courage to say no.

CAPTAIN, *angrily to* MARQUIS. You don't know what you are talking about.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, the captain didn't give way! He sees through all arts, he knows the roguery of women, he doesn't give heed to what they say, he is not taken in by their tears; if they faint, he only makes fun of it.

CAPTAIN. Are all women's tears a lie, then, and their faintings a cheat?

MIRANDOLINA. What! Don't you know, or are you making pretense not to know?

CAPTAIN. Good heavens! Such deceit deserves a knife across the throat!

MIRANDOLINA. Oh, sir, don't be angry because these gentlemen think you were really in love!

COUNT. You are still, you can't deny it.

MARQUIS. One can see it in your eyes.

CAPTAIN, *angrily to MARQUIS*. No, you can't!

MIRANDOLINA. No, gentlemen, I say he is not. I say it. I stick to it, and I am ready to prove it.

CAPTAIN. I can stand this no longer! Count, at some other time you will find me with a proper sword.

*Throwing away MARQUIS' half sword.*

MARQUIS, *picking it up*. Eh, the hilt is worth money.

MIRANDOLINA. Stay here, Captain, for your own sake. These gentlemen believe you are in love with me. You must undeceive them.

CAPTAIN. There is no need for that.

MIRANDOLINA. Oh yes, sir, there is. . . . Wait a minute.

CAPTAIN. What is she going to do?

MIRANDOLINA. The surest sign of love is jealousy; no one who does not know jealousy can have any knowledge of love. If this gentleman cared for me, he could not bear the thought that I was going to another . . . but, as you shall see, he will bear it.

CAPTAIN. Who are you going to marry?

MIRANDOLINA. The husband chosen for me by my father.

FABRIZIO. You are maybe speaking of me?

MIRANDOLINA. Yes, my dear Fabrizio, in the presence of all these gentlemen I give you my hand as a token.

CAPTAIN, *angrily to himself*. Marry him! I won't bear it.

COUNT. If she is marrying Fabrizio she has no fancy for the captain. . . . Yes, marry him, and I will give you what will pay for the wedding.

MARQUIS. Mirandolina, an egg today is worth more than a chicken tomorrow; marry him and I will give you—this very minute—my blessing.

MIRANDOLINA. Thank you, gentlemen, but I have no need of anything. I am but a poor woman, without graces, without

liveliness, not able to kindle any love or any passion at all. But Fabrizio wants me and I will take him.

CAPTAIN. Yes, you wretched woman, marry whoever you will, I know that you deceived me. I know you are triumphing in yourself at having dragged me down. . . . But I will go away out of your sight. I leave my curse upon your cajoleries and your tears and your pretenses. You have made me know what an unlucky power you have over us, you have made me learn at my own expense that to get the better of you it is not enough to despise you, but to run away.

*Goes.*

COUNT. And you said just now that he was not in love!

MIRANDOLINA. Hush, hush. He is gone and he will not return, and if the matter is over now, I call myself very lucky. Poor man, I succeeded only too well in making him care for me, and I ran an ugly risk. I don't want to do it again. Fabrizio, come here, dear, and give me your hand.

FABRIZIO. Go gently, ma'am. You take delight in drawing men on in this way, and then you think that I am ready to take you all the same!

MIRANDOLINA. Ah, get along, you goose; it was a joke, a fancy, a play game. I was like a child having no one to keep me in order. When I am married I know what I will do.

FABRIZIO. What will you do?

CAPTAIN'S SERVANT *comes in.*

SERVANT. Mistress Mirandolina, I am come to pay my respects before I go. They are putting the horses to the carriage.

MIRANDOLINA, *gives him the gold bottle.* Good-by, take this little bottle as a remembrance, and forgive me for anything I may have done.

SERVANT. Good luck to you, ma'am. . . . Good-by.

*Goes weeping.*

MIRANDOLINA. Thank God, the captain is gone! I do feel sorry. I won't try any more of those tricks to the end of my life.

COUNT. Mirandolina, child, married or single, I will always be the same to you.

MARQUIS. You may always make use of my protection.

MIRANDOLINA. Dear gentlemen, now that I am marrying, I don't want patrons. I don't want amusement. I have been amusing myself up to this, and I was foolish and I ran into danger. I won't do so any more! This is my husband.

FABRIZIO. But go easy now.

MIRANDOLINA. Go easy! What are you talking about? What difficulties are there? What is to hinder us? Give me your hand.

FABRIZIO. We had best make out our contract first.

MIRANDOLINA. What contract? This is our contract. . . . Give me your hand or get away with you to your own district.

FABRIZIO. I will give you my hand . . . but after . . .

MIRANDOLINA. But after . . . yes, my dear, I will belong to you altogether. Don't be doubting me. I will always love you; you will be my very life.

FABRIZIO, *giving her his hand*. Take it, my dear. I cannot but give in.

MIRANDOLINA. That is another thing settled.

COUNT. Mirandolina, you are a great woman; you are able to bring men to whatever you will.

MIRANDOLINA. If that is so, I may make one request of you, there is just one last favor I will ask.

COUNT. You have but to tell it.

MARQUIS. Speak out.

FABRIZIO. What is she going to ask for this time?

MIRANDOLINA. I ask you as a favor to find for yourselves rooms at another inn.

FABRIZIO. Bravo! I see now you are in earnest.

MIRANDOLINA. I thank you very much for all your kind words. In changing my state I mean to change my manners, and you yourselves may also learn a lesson. If you are ever in danger of losing your hearts, think of the humbug you have seen practiced and the trickeries, and remember Mirandolina!